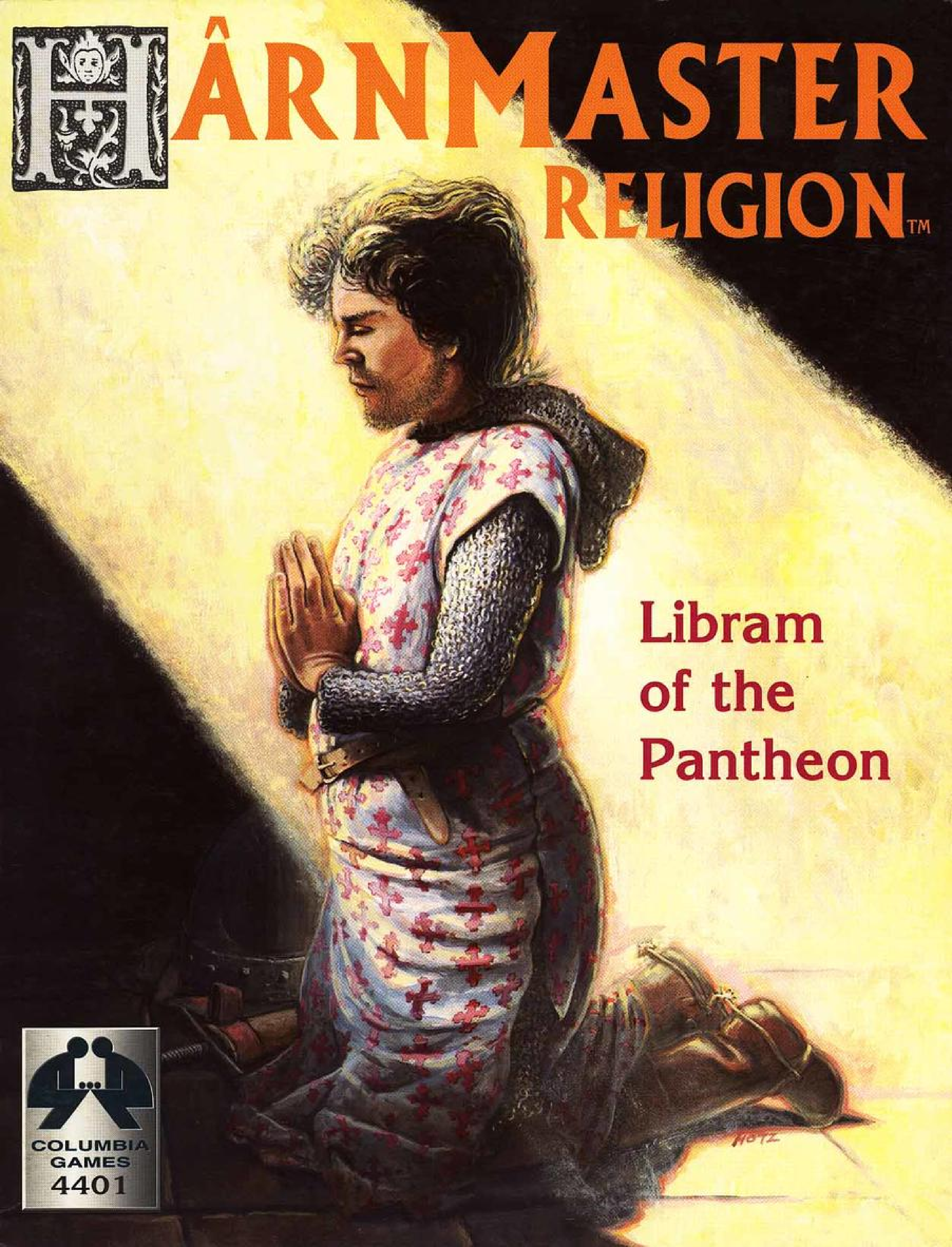
HÂRNMASTER RELIGION™

Libram of the Pantheon



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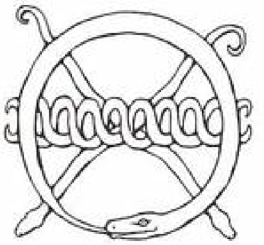
INTRODUCTION



Welcome to *HârnMaster Religion*. Our goals in writing this book were to develop a system which is enjoyable, flexible, and playable while also including detail. Since preferences can vary a good deal from one group to another, we have provided a base set of rules, and then a number of optional rules. Each option has a checkbox ☐ which can be marked if the rule is included. The GM and players can discuss their preferences and include only the optional rules they want.

This book is part of the *HârnMaster* rules system. The books in the series are:

- ***HârnMaster Core Rules:*** Rules for character creation, skill use, combat, healing, running a campaign, and generating treasure hoards. These form the base rules and information needed to play the game; a foundation to build upon.
- ***HârnMaster Magic:*** Rules for creating and running a Shek-Pvar (mage), and a wide selection of spells for each convocation.
- ***HârnMaster Religion:*** Rules and information about the ten major deities worshiped on Hârn. Separate articles describe the history, organization, regalia, and rituals of each church.
- ***HârnMaster Bestiary:*** A comprehensive collection of creatures, some unique to Hârn. Each creature has a page dedicated to it. On the front of the page is a full-color illustration; this is what the GM shows to the players when they encounter the creature. The back of the page contains detailed information about the creature's habits, behavior, etc.
- ***HârnMaster Military:*** Rules for Mounted Combat, Weaponcraft, Chivalry, and Tournaments are included. The life of a common soldier, and the options available for advancement are also detailed.

Organization of *HârnMaster*

HârnMaster is organized into articles, each covering a different subject that is identified by a unique colored heading. The pages are punched for insertion into a three-ring binder in any order desired. This format allows everyone to organize and expand these rules to suit their taste.

HÂRNMASTER RELIGION™

Libram of the Pantheon

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Special thanks to Magnus Lycka and all other members of the *Harn Religious Team*. The impressive volume of HRT work can be viewed on the Internet.

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Religion pervades all Lythian cultures and levels of society. Most folk share a common set of pantheistic beliefs. They roughly agree on the same story of creation, accept the existence of ten major deities, but most worship only one.

THE NATURE OF THE GODS

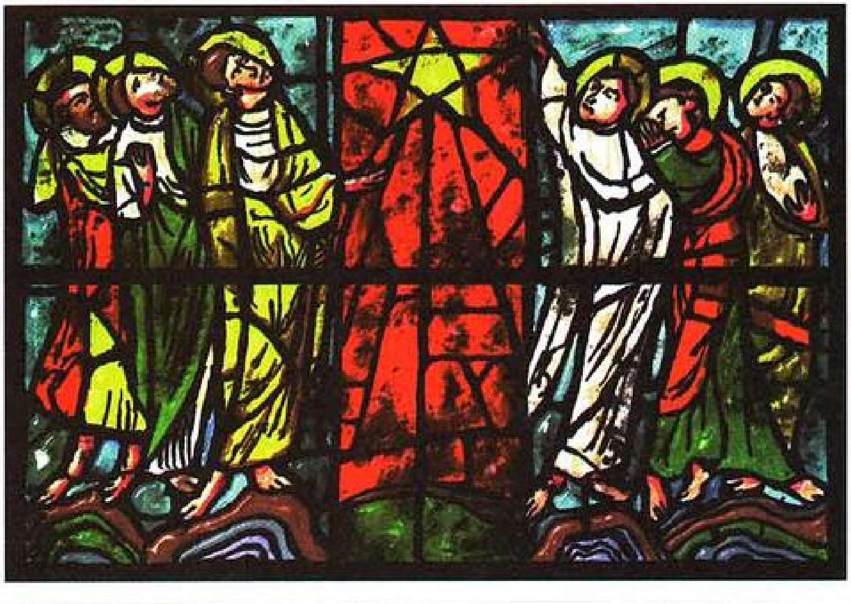
A few scholars may argue that the gods are figments of the imaginations of men, but most Lythians believe implicitly in their existence. Hârnic society is pregnant with divine superstition as evidenced by this short tale.

> *Boradak, a slightly less than perfectly devout Halean, decided it might be a good idea to make a donation at the local temple. He walked in, said a few prayers, and, on his way out, tossed a silver penny in the contribution bowl. So far, so good.*
>
> *He was then heard to mutter, "There, I hope that satisfies the B*#ch." On his way down the stairs, he slipped on a purple scarf and rolled 20 feet to the cobblestone street below, breaking an arm and cracking his skull.*
>
> *Boradak survived this mishap and pondered its cause. Did he really stumble over a fluttering, diaphanous, purple silk scarf that didn't seem to have been there before?*
>
> *Boradak concluded that Gods may not exist, but Goddesses certainly did, and he became a more devoted follower of Halea.*

Demigods and Demons

In addition to the ten major deities, hundreds of lesser semi-divine entities are worshiped by Lythians. The powers of the deities, if not infinite, are beyond the compass of mortals. Demigods, on the other hand, are closer to humankind; their imperfections and weaknesses, their attitudes and objectives, may at least be comprehended by mortals.

Demigods are of two types: those who serve one of the ten great deities by choice or compulsion, and those who serve no master. They vary in strength and attitude. Some demigods are confined to specific regions by greater beings or principles, some are associated with particular peoples or institutions, and some are semi-legendary mortal heroes. A demon is simply a demigod one believes to be evil.



THE PANTHEON

Agrik (AG-rik)

The fiery, evil god of war, favored by those who enjoy cruelty and destruction. Agrik is worshipped by dozens of squabbling clerical sects and fighting orders.

Halea (ha-LEE-uh)

The goddess of wealth and pleasure. She demands unswerving devotion from her adherents. Only women can enter her clergy.

Ilvir (il-VEER)

The creator of the *Ivashu*. His followers are individualistic, creative, and mystical. Dozens of sects worship Ilvir, although his adherents are few and mostly found in Orbaal.

Larani (la-RAH-nee)

The Lady of Paladins is the goddess of chivalry and battle, favored by the feudal nobility. Those who follow her are expected to display courage, compassion, and honor.

Morgath (MOR-gath)

Morgath is the master of chaos, evil, and the undead, who despises all things fair and noble. His church is dour and ruthless, and infamous for its human sacrifice.

Naveh (NAH-vay)

A god of darkness, best known as the bringer of nightmares, and worshipped by thieves and assassins. His fanatical clerics will commit suicide to prove their faith.

Peoni (pee-OH-nee)

The gentle goddess of agriculture and healing, worshipped by most rural folk. Peoni's clergy are divided into celibate male and female orders; both maintain hospitals. Temples are always near poverty.

Sarajin (sah-rah-YEEN)

The god of battlelust, who demands honor and bravery from his adherents, mostly Ivinians. His sport is war and he sometimes joins human battles.

Save-K'nor (SAH-vay-kuh-NOR)

The god of knowledge and seeker of enlightenment, the Sage of Heaven. His adherents believe that a stable and ordered society precludes evil behavior.

Siem (see-EMM)

The benign god of mystery, magic, and dreams. He is the special deity of elves and dwarves. Siem's worshippers favor a personal approach to the deity.

CHURCH HIERARCHIES

Each of the ten major deities have mortal adherents who have created religious institutions to regulate and foster their version of the truth. The organization of churches vary greatly. Each is detailed in the separate deity articles, but a few generalities can be made.

All churches have a clergy and laity although a few, like the Church of Naveh, almost totally ignore the latter. Some laity may be extremely pious, but they will not be taught the higher rituals of the church. The clergy are the priests and priestesses, those who organize and administer the temples and devote their lives to serving the deity. Although often simple folk by birth, clerics enjoy a privileged social status between that of guildsmen and the nobility.

Circles of Command

All churches of the ten major deities have ceremonial levels of knowledge called *Circles of Command.* Most churches have seven Circles, although those without Pontiffs have only six. The table below shows the *minimum* Ritual ML required for each Circle. It also indicates offices a member of that Circle is *qualified* to hold.

Circle	RML	Church Office
I	1+	Laity
II	21+	Acolyte, Lay Grandmaster
III	51+	Priest
IV	71+	High Priest, Abbot
V	86+	Bishop, Archbishop
VI	96+	Primate, Cardinal
VII	106+	Pontiff (if applicable)

Those baptized in a faith are automatically I Circle. Those entering the church as a career are admitted to the II Circle when their Ritual ML is 21+. Clerics are admitted to the III Circle when they are ordained. Admission to higher Circles require a minimum RML, but induction is never automatic. The approval of at least three existing members of the desired Circle is required. This may occur soon after a cleric achieves the required Ritual ML, or it can be delayed by years of political intrigue.

Church Offices

Churches appoint members of the clergy to permanent or temporary offices. All promotions are controlled by those with higher office, except the highest office is usually the result of election by peers. In some churches the offices of Archbishop, Primate, and Pontiff are (effectively) restricted to clerics of noble blood.

Characters may apply for appointment to any vacant church office for which their current *Circle* qualifies them. Appointments are handled solely at GM discretion; a candidate's *Intrigue* ML and *Social Class* are always significant.

Clerical and Fighting Orders

Most churches contain one or more clerical orders and most clerics are members of a specific order. The lay followers of a deity are not required to join any particular clerical order, but those with martial skill often belong to fighting orders which are sponsored by various clerical orders. Clerical and fighting orders have their own hierarchies.

Church	Morality
Agrik	**03–13**
Halea	**05–16**
Ilvir	**05–16**
Larani	**08–18**
Morgath	**03–07**
Naveh	**03–10**
Peoni	**08–18**
Sarajin	**05–16**
Save-K'nor	**08–18**
Siem	**11–18**

Morality

Morality is a crucial attribute for clerics (see CHARACTER 10). Although church officials may be unaware of a character's true Morality, deities are not so easily fooled. Clerics entering a church for which their Morality attribute is inappropriate are unlikely to prosper, or even live very long.

Circles & Rank

Circles are ceremonial ranks, whereas offices are political ranks. Higher circles are evidence of a certain level of knowledge, but in no way guarantee promotion to higher office. A High Priest is a member of at least the IV Circle, but most members of the IV Circle are simple priests. Although rare, there have been cases where a VII Circle pontiff retired to end his days as a simple abbey priest.

Canon Law

Legally recognized churches have the right to hold their own courts and administer justice for a variety of religious crimes, including blasphemy, heresy, and witchcraft. Temple courts often use trial by ordeal to determine guilt or innocence. The penalties handed out vary from one church to another; Peonian courts rarely inflict permanent harm on offenders, but Agrikan courts are fond of burning at the stake. Temple courts must obtain secular consent to any death penalties, a formality often ignored by some churches. For more information, see *HârnPlayer.*

PIETY POINTS

A Piety Point (PP) is a unit of favor with a deity. Characters accrue PPs by performing actions beneficial to their deity. They expend them by calling for divine intervention or by committing a sin. Piety Points may also be used to increase the EML of **any** skill roll by *Prayer* (sidebar, p6). Characters keep a running total of Piety Points on their Profiles; the GM may also keep track and that figure is the authoritative one.

Piety Points are dedicated to a single deity. Characters can, if they wish, maintain separate Piety totals for two or more deities. Multiple worship is rare, especially among clerics. Most folk fear this will compromise the passage of their soul when they die.

Obtaining Piety

Characters begin play with some Piety Points. Additional PPs are acquired by performing various religious activities/services. The Piety Gain Table (next page) is a guide for the GM. The first number in square brackets is the percentage chance the activity will accrue PPs for the character. The second number in square brackets is the number of PPs that would be acquired. On completion of the activity, roll 1d100. If the result is equal to or less than the percentage given, increase the character's Piety total by the indicated number.

Sin, Piety, & Morality

If a character acts in a manner inconsistent with their *god's* morality, the GM should deduct 5-30 PPs depending on the extent of the sin. Remember that a major sin to Larani, might be viewed by Agrik as commendable. Also remember that the viewpoint of a church and its deity may differ; an overzealous or corrupt priest might declare an action to be a major sin, but a deity might not agree.

Sin penalties can be imposed directly, but subtle deductions by the GM are better. Adherents of churches that hear confessions may be able to avoid some penalties, but penances are often imposed, especially on ordained clerics.

The GM may also adjust a character's Morality based upon actions over time. If the character's morality lies outside the deity's acceptable range, the character's piety should be reduced to zero until behavior is appropriate.

Divine Grace

Characters with a Piety total that equals or exceeds their RML are said to have *Divine Grace*. That is, a character with RML 15 must have at least 15PPS for Divine Grace, but a character with RML 87 requires at least 87PPS. Divine Grace has the following important effects:

1. Characters with Divine Grace are deemed "worthy" of divine aid, and characters without Divine Grace are "unworthy". Hence, a call for divine intervention is more likely to succeed for those with Divine Grace.
2. Invocations that heal injuries, cure diseases, remove curses, etc., have a Special Bonus of +10 if the subject has Divine Grace.
3. A character without Divine Grace will have difficulty convincing a deity to claim his spirit when he dies, forcing it to wonder the worlds as a shade, or to negotiate with another deity for acceptance. See: *Afterlife*, p18.

Motives of the Gods

The motives of the gods vary. The kind of universe desired by Morgath, the Lord of Chaos, is different from that wanted by Peoni, the gentle patron of healing. The problem all ten gods face is that they cannot destroy each other without risking all their destructions. Hence, the Concordat limits the actions that may be taken.

Conflict between the gods is now more or less confined to the mortal and semi-mortal planes of Kethira and Yashain. Siem has withdrawn to the Blessed Realm, and Ilvir broods alone at Araka-Kalai. Halea, Naveh, Save-K'nor, and Sarajin have established their neutrality, although each favors varying degrees of order and chaos. Peoni is effectively a non-combatant. Larani stands, essentially alone, against Morgath and Agrik. These two evil deities have not formed an alliance, but it is their works that Larani tries to undo.

These divisions are not simply based on morality. The quasi-war between Larani and the dark pair is more complex than a simple epic. Agrik, and especially Morgath, represent a degree of chaos, a breaking down of order that would greatly change the worlds. To prevent total chaos, and enforce the Concordat, the other gods support Larani to survive, but not to win.

Impiety & Corruption

There corruption in every church. Most churches argue that their clerics are infallible, but corrupt ones will be punished in the afterlife. This may be of small comfort to a cleric who is roasted alive on false charges of heresy.

The piety and ritual rules allow clerics to perform ritual invocations without piety, although pious priests can do them better.

Church Influence

The fragmentation of the churches resulting from pantheism weakens their universal influence, but their power in specific regions, or among some economic groups is significant. The churches of Larani and Peoni dominate in the kingdoms of Chybisa, Kaldor, Kanday, and Melderyn. The church of Agrik is prominent in the Kingdom of Rethem. Adherents of Save K'nor tend to be scholars with influence throughout Hârn, on Melderyn in particular. Sarajinism is the dominant faith of the Ivinian conquerors of Orbaal, while Ilvir holds some sway among their subject Jarin. Siem is primarily worshipped by the Khuzdul and Sindarin, although each race tends to focus their faith through one of two demigod servants. Halea has support from merchants and guildsmen in all states, but is most dominant in the Thardic Republic. The churches of Morgath and Naveh have few adherents; both are proscribed and covert throughout most of Hârn, except the Church of Morgath has enormous influence in Golotha, the principal city of Rethem.

PIETY GAIN TABLE

PRAYER [20%/1PP] One uninterrupted hour of prayer and/or meditation in an appropriate temple or on other consecrated ground. If the location is not consecrated, the chance of success is reduced to 10%.

FASTING [50%/2PP] One accrual roll is made at the end of each full day (24 hours) of fasting, which cannot include any other activity except prayer, sleep, etc. The chance of accrual increases by 5% for each consecutive day. Hence, after three consecutive days, the daily roll is made at 60%/2PP. The maximum chance of accrual is 95% (after 10 consecutive days of fasting). **Note:** starving is not fasting; characters must make a conscious decision not to eat when food is available.

CONFESSION [80%/2PP] The churches of Halea, Larani, Morgath, Naveh, Peoni, and Save-K'nor hear confessions. Only confessions of "significant guilt" are worthy of piety. Confessions must be made to an ordained cleric who (80% chance) may demand a penance.

DAILY MASS [30%/2PP] Attendance at the daily church service held by most temples. Daily Mass is generally held in the early evening and lasts one or hours. Services may be attended by anyone.

MONTHLY LOW MASS [60%/2PP] Most churches hold a special monthly Low Mass for the laity. The day varies by church. There is no Daily Mass on this day.

MONTHLY HIGH MASS [80%/3PP] Most churches hold a monthly High Mass which may be attended only by the **clergy.** The day varies by church; most have one day a month they consider more holy than any other.

FEAST MASS [90%/5PP] Held yearly on the principal holy day, this mass often lasts four hours. It is usually followed by second service open only to clerics. There is no High Mass or Daily Mass on this day. A "feaster" is a name given to adherents who attend only the Feast Mass—it is a derogatory term.

TEMPLE SERVICE [90%/3PP] Character performs a minor task for the temple, such as cleaning out the storerooms or latrines. The service should take a couple of days to perform. Piety accrual is on completion and may be varied by the GM to reflect the difficulty (or unpleasantness) of the task.

DONATION/SACRIFICE [90%/variable] Characters may make donations to temples or sacrifices to their deity. A sacrifice must be appropriate to the deity. Siem, for example, would cast out anyone who sacrificed a life; Morgath would be very pleased. Something of high value to the character will probably be more favored by the deity.

QUEST [95%/variable] Character agrees to perform a task in the service of a church and/or deity. Award 1-10 PPs each day depending on the danger involved and the character's conduct. Characters who *willingly* abandon the task before completion lose *double* the piety received.

PILGRIMAGE [95%/variable] Character undertakes a journey to a holy site of the deity. Piety granted should reflect the distance and danger involved.

***NOTE:** Piety is granted by a deity (not the church). Because the ways of deities are incomprehensible to mortals, the piety for any act is random at GM discretion.*

Monthly Low Mass

Agrik	*Low Ceremony of the Balefire* 8th, 18th, 28th
Halea	*Shesneala Day* 7th, 17th, 27th
Ilvir	Varies from temple to temple
Larani	*Soratir* 5th, 15th, 25th
Morgath	*Shadryn-Vars* 26th
Naveh	--
Peoni	*Lesser Sapelah* 4th, 12th, 20th, 28th
Sarajin	--
Save-K'nor	*Velere* 6th, 16th, 26th
Siem	*Night of High Perspective* (15th) *Night of Silent Renewal* (30th)

Monthly High Mass

Agrik	*High Ceremony of the Balefire* 8th
Halea	Shesneala, 7th
Ilvir	Varies from temple to temple
Larani	*Alamirata* 2nd, 7th, 12th, 17th, 22nd, 27th
Morgath	*Degrees of Nyardath* 13th
Naveh	*Dezenaka* 30th
Peoni	*Greater Sapelah* 14th–17th
Sarajin	None
Save-K'nor	*Inbarrin* 6th, 16th, 26th
Siem	None

Yearly Feast Mass

Agrik	*Feast of the Balefire* 1- 8th Agrazhar
Halea	*Banquet of Delights* 1- 7th Halane
Ilvir	*Araksin Festival* 30th Ilvin
Larani	*Feast of Saint Ambrathas* 15-17th Larane
Morgath	*Liturgy of Vabukrai* 13th Morgat
Naveh	*Night of Shadows* 30th Navek
Peoni	*Restoration Festival* 1-4th Peonu
Sarajin	*Bjarri's Feast* 17-25th Kelen (Saraju)
Save-K'nor	*Keserne (Saints' Mass)* 6th Savor
Siem	*Night of Golden Twilight* 15th Azura

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Divine Intervention is an attempt to enlist the aid of a deity to perform a miracle. Interventions are implemented by gods; if they choose to respond at all, *they* decide what to do. A deity may be open to suggestion, but will not take kindly to demands.

DIVINE INTERVENTION ROUTINE

[1] Wishes of the Caller

A character may call for Divine Intervention at any time. The character informs the GM of the nature and intent of the call. The purpose of this declaration is to help the GM assess the caller's motives, and thus the appropriateness of the call. A call for intervention may be anything from, "Please help us out of this terrible mess" to "Please tell me the contents of this box". There are no limits, just consequences.

[2] Piety Expenditure

A character calling for Divine Intervention must have at least one Piety Point (1PP) for that deity. Each deity is rated (see next page) for a base chance to intervene. Callers have the option to increase their chance of intervention by offering their deity Piety Points. Each 1PP increases the chance of intervention by 1%, up to a maximum chance of 95%. All piety committed is forfeit, even if a call fails. Piety from two or more characters may NOT be combined; each must make a separate call.

[3] Assessing the Call

The GM now assesses the call as Worthy, Neutral, or Unworthy. How would the church or deity benefit from the requested intervention? Is the call motivated by personal gain, or by a sincere desire to serve the deity? Does the call violate any of the "Principles of Intervention" noted in the sidebar? For example, Larani would probably intervene to save adherents defending a Peonian temple, but not if they are razing an Agrikan temple. Calls that are trivial or unethical (for that deity) are always Unworthy. Conversely, a call to do something the deity would probably want anyway is more likely to succeed and should be assessed as Worthy.

Assessment	Intervention
Worthy	+20
Neutral	+0
Unworthy	–20

The GM may adjust the intervention modifier as desired.

NOTE: *Ritual skill plays no part in Divine Intervention. A pious layman has more chance of Divine Intervention than an impious cleric of high ritual.*

The Concordat

To prevent all-out war, there is a Concordat limiting the interference of deities in the affairs of lesser beings. Although mortals cannot know the truth or nature of these limits, the following principles, hotly debated by theologians, have evolved to justify the limitations of the gods.

These principles are not always followed precisely by the deities, are often violated by demigods, and certainly do not apply to mortal adherents.

Principle of Ineluctability: *A mortal mind cannot comprehend divine purpose.*

Principle of Transpotence: *Since there is more than one deity, and lethal conflict between them is possible, the deities are not omnipotent.*

Principle of Preservation: *The gods cannot initiate any action that might result in the destruction of the All.*

Principle of Reaction: *Every intervention can be countered by a morally-opposing deity.*

Principle of Proxy: *The gods cannot act directly against one another, only through the conflict of demigods and mortals.*

Principle of Faith: *The gods are reluctant to prove their existence, and use natural force whenever possible to explain their acts.*

Principle of Interference: *Deities cannot take direct action against the adherents of another deity, nor take their loyalty by threat of force. If called upon to save the day in a hopeless melee, deities are far more likely to preserve their own adherents than to harm the adherents of another deity.*

Principle of Piety: *Intervention cannot occur unless requested by an adherent.*

Principle of Revelation: *Deities cannot give unearned knowledge to their adherents.*

Principle of Force: *The gods always employ the minimum force necessary for an intervention.*

Principle of Self-Interest: *Deities are never obliged to act against their own interests.*

Principle of Temporal Integrity: *No deity may modify the past.*

DIVINE INTERVENTION TABLE

Deity	Intervention	Conditions	Retribution
Agrik	01–15	41–00	81–00
Halea	01–20	31–00	81–00
Ilvir	01–10	51–00	76–00
Larani	01–15	41–00	86–00
Morgath	01–25	21–00	76–00
Naveh	01–15	41–00	81–00
Peoni	01–20	31–00	91–00
Sarajin	01–15	41–00	86–00
Save-K'nor	01–10	51–00	86–00
Siem	01–15	41–00	91–00
Demigod	+10	-20	-10

DEMIGODS: *A call to a demigod increases the chance of Intervention for the appropriate deity by 10, but also increases the chance of Conditions by 20, or the chance of Retribution by 10.*

Intervention Roll

Intervention success is determined by a 1d100 roll. The base chance of an intervention (given) is increased by the caller's piety commitment and modified by the GM's assessment of the call. The maximum chance of any intervention is 95%.

Deities are averse to leaving direct evidence of their actions or even of their existence. When a deity intervenes, it should be impossible to prove an intervention has actually occurred. Virtually any intervention can be explained away as just as coincidence, the normal workings of nature, etc. The GM should limit any remarks to explaining the effects, never the reality or rationale of divine intervention.

Conditions Roll

If the call for intervention ***succeeds,*** a second 1d100 roll (unmodified) is made to see if the deity imposes conditions for the aid. If a *Condition* is generated, the character is given a task to fulfill in exchange for the intervention. Such tasks vary from minor services that must be undertaken within a year, to the sacrifice of a hand. It depends on the deity, the importance of the intervention to the character, and so on. Refusal to fulfill a Condition may be unwise.

Retribution Roll

If the call for intervention ***fails,*** a second 1d100 roll (unmodified) is made to see if the deity exacts some kind of *Retribution* on the caller. If a retribution is generated, the deity not only fails to help, but also inflicts some curse or penance at GM discretion.

Critical Intervention Rolls

As for skills, numbers divisible by five can be used to generate **CS** and **CF** on the Intervention, Conditions, and Retribution rolls. These results can aid the GM to determine the nature and extent of divine will.

Sample Call

Lemasin is a layman worshipper of Peoni with 60 Piety Points. Brigands ambush his group, which is losing badly. He decides to call to his goddess for aid and so informs the GM (who pauses play to resolve the call).

Lemasin declares his intent to save his companions from the wrath of unbelievers and, if it is not too much trouble, himself as well. He pledges 50PP to the call.

The GM decides the intervention lies somewhere between Worthy and Neutral and instructs the player to add 10 to his roll.

The base chance of a Peoni intervention is 20%. The call is +50 for Piety, and +10 for the GM's Call Assessment, giving a total of 80%.

Lemasin rolls 28, an intervention, and a few moments of regret for the 50 PPs he "wasted" to improve his chances. He then makes a second roll to avoid conditions and achieves 55. This means that Lemasin has obtained a *conditional* intervention from Peoni.

Moments after the call is made, Lemasin is overcome by dizziness and falls unconscious, as do the remaining members of his party. While unconscious, Lemasin has a vivid dream involving some holy relics that have been stolen by Indari tribesmen in distant Azeryan.

Upon awakening, Lemasin and his party discover their wounds are not as bad as they had thought. They also find the tracks of a large bear; of their enemies there is no sign. And Lemasin feels a grateful urge to journey to Azeryan...

☐ PRAYER (Optional)

Characters may pray in the hope of gaining the favor of their deity for any endeavor. Prayers take 15–RSI seconds.

The effect is to increase the EML of a skill by one point for each Piety Point spent, up to a maximum of 20PPs. That is, a character can spend 20PPs to raise the EML on a Climbing roll by +20.

RITUAL SKILL

Ritual is a skill which reflects a character's knowledge of church dogma, holy scriptures, chants, songs, and mysteries. There is a separate Ritual Skill for each deity. It is the base skill used by clerics for performing ritual invocations.

Ritual is an automatic skill, opened at SB1 by all characters during character generation. The applicable deity should be the one that reasonably fits the character's social and cultural background. This deity may be changed during the game if the choice seems reasonable (GM discretion).

Characters may, theoretically, have Ritual for two or more deities. Opening a second Ritual assumes the character has received some basic instruction in the church mysteries and been Baptized into the faith. Churches may be fooled, but not deities. Separate Piety Point totals must be kept for each deity.

CHURCH	RITUAL SB	SUNSIGN
AGRIK	**Voi Int Str**	**Nad +2; Ang+1; Ahn +1**
HALEA	**Voi Int Cml**	**Tar +2; Hir +1; Mas +1**
ILVIR	**Voi Int Aur**	**Sko +2; Tai +1; Ula +1**
LARANI	**Voi Int Wil**	**Ang +2; Ahn +1; Fen +1**
MORGATH	**Voi Int Aur**	**Lad +2; Ahn +1; Mas +1**
NAVEH	**Voi Int Wil**	**Mas +2; Sko +1; Tar +1**
PEONI	**Voi Int Dex**	**Ara +2; Ahn +1; Ula +1**
SARAJIN	**Voi Int Str**	**Fen +2; Ara +1; Lad +1**
SAVE-K'NOR	**Voi Int Int**	**Tai +2; Tar +1; Sko +1**
SIEM	**Voi Int Aur**	**Hir +2; Ula +1; Fen +1**

NOTE: *The attributes and sunsigns above for Ritual SB have been revised from those published in HârnMaster Core (Skills 3).*

IMPROVING RITUAL ML (RML)

Clerics receive three (3) development rolls per month for meditation and study. These may be used to improve any open skills ***excluding*** Ritual. *Bonus* skill development rolls for practice and use of specific skills that month are made at GM discretion. Ritual ML can ***only*** be improved by:

1. Learning new invocations
2. Reading *Holy Tomes*
3. Performing an invocation in an *adverse* situation (GM Discretion). Ritual development rolls are ***never*** earned for "practice" because a deity would not respond favorably to thousands of clerics invoking miracles simply to gain experience.

For each skill development roll to improve RML, roll 1d100 + RSB. If the sum is greater than the current RML, increase it by one (1); otherwise, not.

☐ Counseling (optional)

Clerics may be called upon to minister to important individuals. This can be done by testing a Counseling EML which is Rhetoric + RSI.

Comparing the success levels of Counseling with a multiple of the subject's Morality, Will, or Intelligence may determine results.

☐ Sermons (optional)

Communicating with a congregation can be handled by testing a Sermon EML, which is Oratory + RSI.

The *Value Enhancement* table (SKILLS 7) can determine the quality of a sermon, number of converts, etc.

☐ SMPs (Optional)

Skill Maintenance Points (SMPs) may be used to monitor and control skill development rolls in a similar manner to that given in SKILLS 8. However, SMPs gained by practice and study of religious materials cannot be used for development rolls in unrelated skills.

ENTERING A CHURCH

Characters can be admitted to a church for religious training either during character generation, or later in the course of play. Interested characters must visit a temple or abbey to be interviewed by the Master of Acolytes, or find a priest to sponsor the application. An appropriate *Morality* and minimum *Ritual SB* of 13 are generally required, but a donation to temple coffers may overcome a deficiency in talent. Acolyte training takes five to seven (1d3+4) years.

CLERIC SKILLS

[1] Cleric Occupation Skills

Characters begin play as newly *ordained* clerics of the *3rd Circle* and open the Skills below for "ALL" and for their specific church. If a skill is listed under "ALL" and also under a particular deity, use the ***higher*** OML. If any listed skill is already known at a higher ML, add SB to the ML. Specialties, if any, are given in parenthesis.

ALL: Ritual/4, Rhetoric/4, Intrigue/4, Mental Conflict/4, Oratory/3, Folklore/3, Embalming/2, Physician/2, Law/2, Drawing/2, Heraldry/2, Native Tongue & Local Script/70+SB. Church language & script (optional).

AGRIK: Initiative/6, Unarmed/4, Axe (Sickle)/4, Club (Mace)/4, Shield/4, Heraldry/3 Surikal/3 (optional).

HALEA: Lovecraft/4, Dancing/3, Mathematics/2, Musician/2, Perfumery/2, 2nd Language/4, 2nd Script/70+SB.

ILVIR: Animalcraft (Ivashu)/4, Drawing/3, Physician/3, Tarotry/2, Herblore/2, Ivashi/3 (optional).

LARANI: Initiative/6, Unarmed/4, Dagger/4, Sword/4, Shield/4, Heraldry/3.

MORGATH: Dagger/4, Embalming/3, Hideworking (Human Skin)/2, Woodworking (Masks)/2, Tarotry/2, Ormauk/3 (optional).

NAVEH: Initiative/6, Unarmed/5, Stealth/5, Dagger/4, Acrobatics/3, Legerdemain/2, Lockcraft/2.

PEONI: Agriculture/4, Animalcraft/3, Herblore/3, Physician/3, Weatherlore/3, Textilecraft/2.

SARAJIN: Initiative/6, Unarmed/4, Axe/4, Dagger/4, Shield/4, Runecraft/3, Seamanship/2.

SAVE-K'NOR: Drawing/3, Mathematics/3, Law/3, Heraldry/2, 2nd Language/4, 3rd language/3, 2nd Script/70+SB.

SIEM: Astrology/4, Runecraft/3, Foraging/3, Survival/3, Weatherlore/3, Tarotry/2, Musician/2, Herblore/2.

☐ Church Language & Script

Each church has holy scriptures written in a particular language and script:

Church	Language	Script
Agrik	Azeryani	Zerin
Halea	Karuia	Zerin
Ilvir	Old Jarinese	Khruni
Larani	Emela	Khruni
Morgath	Ormauk	Nuvesarl
Naveh	Besha	Neramic
Peoni	Emela	Khruni
Sarajin	Ivinian	Runic
Save-K'nor	Azeri	Tianta
Siem	Sindarin	Selenian

Churches teach this language and script to all Acolytes. The Language is opened to SB3 if same family, and SB2 if an alien family. Open the Script to 70 + SB.

☐ Temple Tongues

Three churches perform their ceremonies and rituals in a private (secret) language in addition to their church language.

Church	Temple Tongue
Agrik	Surikal
Ilvir	Ivashi
Morgath	Ormauk

Open the temple tongue to SB3. The higher this language skill, the more proficient a cleric is at performing church ritual. Add the SI of Temple Tongue to RML.

Church of Save-Knor

Those wishing to enter the Church of Save K'nor enter the Order of Hyn-Aelori. Entry into the other two orders is restricted to Hyn-Aelori acolytes who demonstrate very high aptitude in their studies. For details, see Save K'nor 5, Manidar. Those qualified to enter one of the two elite orders receive additional training:

Rydequelyn: Singing/4, Stealth/4, Oratory/4, Acting/3, Musician/3, Acrobatics/2, Lockcraft/2.

Shea-al-Aecor: Intrigue/5, Rhetoric/4, Law/4, Heraldry/3, Tarotry/2.

[2] Cleric Optional Skills

Like all new characters, clerics have five (5) option points to open new skills or to improve open skills. Choose new skills from the list below. Other reasonable skills (GM discretion) may be opened at normal OML.

Optional Skills: Acting/2, Alchemy/2, Astrology/2, Cookery/4, Dagger/4, Dancing/3, Drawing/3, Embalming/2, Heraldry/2, Herblore/2, Hideworking/2, Law/2, Mathematics/2, Musician/2, Physician/2, Riding/2, Runecraft/2, Skiing/2, Sling/2, Spear (staff)/4, Survival/3, Swimming/2, Tarotry/2, Unarmed/4, Weatherlore/3.

Each optional skill is opened by expending 1 OP. Open skills (including any new skills just opened) may be improved by SB for 1 OP. No skill may be improved more than once in this way.

[3] Cleric Opening RML

Clerics open Ritual to SB4. If RML is less than ML51, the character begins play as a senior acolyte with the same skills and invocations. However, acolytes will not be taught any *new* invocations until they are ordained (ML51). Characters may NOT expend an Option Point to improve Ritual OML.

[4] Cleric Opening Piety

Instead of the normal 5d6 Piety Points, a cleric begins play with Piety Points equal to Will x5.

[5] Cleric Ritual Invocations

Newly ordained clerics start play knowing some Ritual Invocations. All *Common* invocations (page 13) rated at Circle II are taught to clerics and these are opened ***free.*** Clerics may also learn invocations by spending Ritual Option points equal to RSB. All invocations cost one Ritual Option point per Circle. Invocations specific to each religion can be found in the various deity articles.

Cleric Equipment

Clerics usually complete their training with little of material value. Acolytes are unpaid and the simple monastic life they lead in training does not encourage the accumulation of worldly goods. Newly ordained clerics typically own a wool robe, linen tunic and hose, leather sandals or boots, a dagger or staff, a simple ring denoting their status, and a purse of 6-36 pence.

Cleric Skills (Example)

Takar, a newly ordained cleric of ***Peoni,*** born under the sunsign *Ulandus,* has the following attributes:

Str	12	Eye	10	Int	12
Sta	13	Hrg	11	Aur	10
Dex	11	Sml	10	Wil	15
Agl	13	Voi	14	Cml	12

Takar has a RSB of 13. He opens and/or improves the following skills:

Free	Open Ritual/4 to RML52
Free	Open Rhetoric/4 to ML56
Free	Open Intrigue/4 to ML48
Free	Open Mental Conflict/4 to ML52
Free	Open Oratory/3 to ML39
Free	Open Hârnic/70+SB to ML84
Free	Open Lakise/70+SB to ML81
Free	Open Agriculture/4 to ML60
Free	Open Animalcraft/3 to ML45
Free	Open Herblore/3 to ML39
Free	Open Physician/3 to ML33
Free	Open Weatherlore/3 to ML33
Free	Open Textilecraft/2 to ML24
1 OP	Open Alchemy/2 to ML22
1 OP	Open Spear (Staff)/4 to ML52
1 OP	Improve Alchemy 1SB to ML33
1 OP	Improve Physician 1SB to ML44
1 OP	Improve Herblore 1SB to ML52

Takar would also open all *Automatic* skills not specifically mentioned above such as Jumping/4, Awareness/4, Singing/3, etc. Option points may also be expended to improve these Automatic skills by 1SB if desired.

Cleric Invocations (example)

Takar (RSB 13) has 13 Ritual Option points. He learns the following invocations:

Free	Baptism II
Free	Blessing II
Free	Commune II
Free	Liturgy II
Free	Marriage II
Free	Passage of the Soul II
3 OPs	Tirrala's Cure III
3 OPs	Habraen's Well III
3 OPs	Peace of Valon III
4 OPs	Peoni's Aid IV

RITUAL INVOCATIONS

Ritual invocations are ceremonies that "encourage" a deity to intervene with a miracle. They originated as a means for clerics to impress their laity or potential converts. These uses are still practiced, but many invocations work equally well (often better) to subdue those who oppose a cleric's deity. Such use is tacitly approved by all churches, since the "proxy wars" of mortals is an acceptable method of conflict among deities.

Theoretically, anyone may learn the rituals of any Circle, but most churches will teach them only to ordained priests. The rituals were once closely associated with a specific circle, higher rituals being the exclusive knowledge of higher circles. They are still classified in this way, but "leakage" of knowledge over the centuries has eroded this restriction. Today, the invocations of any Circle can be taught to any ordained priest.

LEARNING INVOCATIONS

Characters may perform any invocation they ***know***. A cleric's invocations are recorded in the spell section of the Profile, along with their Circle. Invocations can learned in one of three ways: from a mentor, from holy scriptures, or by divine revelation.

[1] Mentor Training

Most invocations are learned from another cleric who knows it. Both the student and mentor must be fluent [ML61+] in a shared language.

[2] Holy Scriptures

There are a wide variety of holy writings, parables, songs, poems, and teachings that can be thought of as Holy Scriptures. Church archives are filled with such written works and clerics consult them to expand their knowledge of dogma and ritual. Invocations can be learned from Holy Scriptures if they are written in a known language and script, or a reliable translator must be available.

[3] Divine Revelation

In rare cases, a deity may wish to provide knowledge of an invocation to any adherent, perhaps even a *lay* adherent. Such revelations are handled at GM discretion, but are only likely to occur if a character generates a Critical Success on a Divine Intervention roll.

PIETY COST

To learn an invocation, a character must spend 5pp per Circle. That is, for a III Circle invocation, a character spends 15 pps. These piety points are forfeit even if the learning roll (next page) fails.

Miracles & Spells

Spells and ritual invocations should never be confused. Clerics seek to draw the deity's attention by performing a ritual, and encourage intervention by limiting the call to a specific effect but, ultimately, they depend on their deity to act. Spellcasting, on the other hand, involves powers released by a mage from the fundament of Kelestia and requires no divine intervention. Mages are generally offended by any suggestion that a spell is miraculous. Conversely, any claim that a ritual invocation is a spell would be construed by most clerics as an admission of blasphemy.

Prophets

It should not be assumed that clerics are the only people with access to ritual invocations. The Morgathian Prophet Balsha, for example, received no formal training in the tenets of the Morgathian Church, yet miracles *were* invoked in his presence. Most clerics feel a prophet appears when a church needs to be steered away from a path of action which does not please its deity. Of course, one person's prophet is another person's heretic.

Holy Scriptures

RTL	Description
2–5	Short passage of scripture, lost verse to a chant or prayer, etc.
6–8	Book or scroll with at least five pages of relevant scripture, etc.
9–12	Collection of books or scrolls, treatise of theology, etc.

Note: *scripture type and value may be randomly generated by 2d6.*

THE LEARNING ROLL

[1] Ritual Target Level [RTL]

The base RTL for learning a Ritual Invocation is RSB+Will.

[2[Mentor/Scripture Bonus

Unless divine revelation applies, a mentor and/or suitable scripture ***must*** be available to teach the invocation. Increase the student's RTL by the Mentor's RSI and/or by the RTL value of the Scripture.

> ***NOTE:*** *The Mentor and Scripture bonus may be combined, but the* ***total*** *cannot exceed the Student's RSB.*

[3] Environment Bonus/Penalty

The cleric should have a quiet consecrated space to study, pray, and commune with the deity. The Consecrated Ground modifier (Religion 12) can be applied to the RTL.

[4] Time Penalty

Two (2) days of study and meditation per *Circle* level are required to learn any Ritual Invocation. This assumes a cleric spends 12 hours per day on the task, and study is continuous until the invocation is mastered. The GM may assess penalties to RTL for interruptions in the study. Some interruptions, like illness or a temple crisis, may justify aborting the study entirely.

[5] The Learning Roll & Developing Ritual ML

A 1d100 roll against the final modified RTL determines whether a student learns the invocation.

CS	Invocation learned. The cleric earns two (2) *Ritual* skill development rolls.
MS	Invocation learned. The cleric earns one (1) *Ritual* skill development roll.
MF	Learning fails. The cleric earns one (1) *Ritual* skill development roll. The cleric may make a new learning roll after spending *50% Time* (one full day per Circle). The same Mentor and/or Scripture cannot be used again after *two* MF failures.
CF	Learning fails miserably. No skill development rolls are given. The cleric may try again as for **MF,** but the same Mentor and/or Scripture cannot be used.

Learning Ritual Invocations

Takar, a cleric of Peoni, has a current RML of 75, RSB of 13, Will of 15, and Piety of 104. He wishes to learn the *common* invocation DIVINATION, which is 4th Circle. This requires him to expend 20PPS.

Takar's base RTL is RSB (13) +WIL (15) =28. He is being taught by a cleric with RML 82 (RSI 8). He also has access to a Scripture that describes the ritual in some detail with a RTL value of 9. The Mentor and Scripture bonus add up to 17, but Takar is limited to a maximum bonus of 13 which is his RSB.

Takar is housed at the Peonian temple in Thay throughout his study and receives a environment bonus of +10.

Takar must apply himself for 8 continuous days, each of 12 hours of study. On the 6th day, false rumors of an Orbaalese raid on the city interrupt his study. The GM assesses a Time penalty of 5.

Takar's effective RTL is 28+13+10–5 = 46. He rolls 64 on the learning roll, a MF. He has failed, but earns one Ritual development roll.

Takar elects to spend another 20PP and try again after 4 days (50% Time) study. This time his learning roll is 25, a Critical Success. Takar learns the ritual and receives two Ritual skill development rolls.

Takar ends his study with a RML of 77 having passed two of his three skill development rolls. His piety is now 104–20–20=64, plus any he gained by attending daily and high masses during his 12 days of study. His soul will be at risk if his piety is less than 77 which he needs for Divine Grace.

☐ Piety Accumulation (optional)

Clerics generally attend and celebrate mass once or twice each day whenever possible. Rolling for this Piety is tedious. GM's have the option to grant clerics automatic Piety of 30PP per month for attending daily and high mass. Piety awarded for special services to the deity is handled normally.

☐ INVOCATION SKILLS

Each ritual invocation can be treated as a separate skill. For this purpose, its SB would equal RSB minus the circle level. The OML for each invocation skill that is learned (same routine) would be SB2 for MS, and SB4 for CS.

The Circle Modifier (RELIGION 12) is ignored when performing invocations.

PERFORMING AN INVOCATION

A conscious cleric may attempt to perform any known invocation at any time in the course of play. The following routine is used:

[1] **Circle Modifier:** Each invocation is performed with a penalty equal to Circle x5. That is, a IV level invocation is –20 to RML.

[2] **Prayer:** Piety is NOT required to perform an invocation. However, a character may expend Piety to improve the chance of success. Each 1 PP spent improves Invocation EML by one (1) up to a maximum of 20PP (+20).

[3] **Consecrated Ground Modifier:** the location where the ritual is done modifies Invocation EML:

+10	Ground consecrated to the cleric's deity
+5	Ground consecrated to an allied deity
+0	Unconsecrated Ground
–5	Ground consecrated to a neutral deity
–20	Ground consecrated to an opposing deity

[4] **Invocation Roll [1d100]:** Once Invocation EML is known, a skill roll is made to determine success. Effects depend on the level of success or failure achieved. In most cases, CS, MS, and CF results are given. MF indicates the invocation has failed, but has no adverse effects.

CRISIS SITUATIONS & TIMING

In crisis situations, the timing of invocations is the same as with spells. That is, a cleric commences the invocation as an *Esoteric* Action Option, and the effect occurs when the ceremony is complete. Invocations that take 1-9 seconds occur at the end of the current combat round; those that take 10-19 seconds occur at the end of the next combat round, and so on. See: SHEK-PVAR 10 for details on crisis timing.

Consecrated Ground

Temples are always consecrated ground, and certain areas such as crypts and graveyards can be made holy to a specific deity by the ritual invocation *Consecration*.

Allied/Opposing Deities

Peoni and Larani are allied and oppose Agrik. Morgath, the Lord of Chaos, opposes everyone, but can be, in some circumstances, "allied" with Agrik. All other gods are neutral, but tend to favor Peoni and Larani.

☐ Invocation Preparations

An invocation call usually consists of a quick prayer or chant, but can involve (if time permits) construction of an altar, burning of incense, an appropriate sacrifice, etc. The intent is to perform a ritual which is less likely to annoy the deity. Players are encouraged to devise suitable prayers, chants, or sacrifices to effect invocation calls and the GM should reward this effort with a *Preparation* bonus of 5-10.

☐ Environment Modifier

It is said the powers of Naveh and Morgath arise at night and slumber in the light, and those of Sarajin are highest amid ice and snow. Any/all of the following modifiers may be applied to Call Assessment at GM discretion.

Deity	Environment
Agrik	**Fire +10, Snow/Sea –10**
Halea	**Urban +10, Wilderness -10**
Morgath	**Dark +10; Light -10**
Naveh	**Dark +10; Light -10**
Sarajin	**Snow/Sea +10, Fire -10**
Siem	**Wilderness +10, Urban -10**

☐ Invocation Morality

The GM may modify Ritual EML for the morality or worthiness of the call, just as is done for Divine Intervention. Clerics are supposed to know what is reasonable and what is not, and abuse of power is likely to be punished in some way or another by the deity. Also, the Divine Grace (p3) of the subject of an invocation can modify the call.

☐ Invocation Piety Cost

Performing an invocation uses up some of a cleric's favor with the deity, reflected by a Piety cost. This cost is the same for all invocations, but does vary by success level as follows:

CS 0PP; **MS** 10PP;
MF 10PP; **CS** 20PP (GM discretion).

BAPTISM II

Time: 15–RSI minutes
Ritual: Prayer/Holy Water
Range: Touch
Duration: The Ceremony

Initiates a new convert, who must be willing, to the faith. The ceremony involves a laying on of hands and dabbing with Holy Water, or other consecrated substance.

MS: Cleric receives 2d6 PP, the subject 5d6 PP.

CS: Doubles the Piety for both cleric and convert.

CF: Convert receives 5d6 Piety, taken from the cleric, who will be struck blind and mute for 3d6 hours if there is a shortfall.

BLESSING II

Time: 25–RSI seconds
Ritual: Prayer
Range: Touch/Sermon
Duration: One Blessing

A ritual to bestow piety on the subject. The piety is transferred from the cleric to the subject. The cleric determines in advance how much Piety will be bestowed. With CS, bestowed piety is deducted at half-cost from the cleric.

A cleric may "broadcast" an equal amount of Piety to a larger audience. Blessing may (optionally) be used to neutralize the effect of a ***Hex*** psionic talent or a ***Curse*** invocation.

COMMUNE II

Time: 15–RSI minutes
Ritual: Prayer/Meditation
Range: Self
Duration: Trance for 5 minutes

An attempt to establish a close spiritual relationship with the deity. The cleric hopes to earn the deity's favor, reflected by receiving bonus Piety.

MS: 2d6 Piety **CS: 4d6 Piety**

CF: The deity is annoyed by this intrusion and punishes the invoker with –4d6 Piety (or worse).

LITURGY II

Time: 15–RSI seconds
Ritual: Prayer
Range: Touch
Duration: One use

An invocation to allow adherents of the same deity to *voluntarily* transfer piety to the invoker. The intent is to give the cleric more piety for any desired use. All donors of piety must touch the invoker.

CS: Receive up to 20PP from each donor.

MS: Receive up to 10PP from each donor.

MARRIAGE II

Time: Variable
Ritual: Prayer/Chant
Range: Touch
Duration: The Ceremony

A marriage ceremony which typically lasts 10-60 minutes. Both the groom and bride must be of the same religion, or one spouse must be baptized in the other's faith before marriage. The ceremony blesses and awards 3d6 piety to each spouse, from the deity with success, or from the cleric with failure.

PASSAGE OF THE SOUL II

Time: 15–RSI mins
Ritual: Prayer
Range: N/A
Duration: N/A

A funeral ceremony to aid a soul to make a quick and uneventful death journey. The intent is for the cleric and/or any attendees to give the departed sufficient piety to ensure Divine Grace.

The cleric provides 3d6 piety and each attendee provides 1d6 piety to the departed. Individuals may give additional piety by special prayer, etc.

AWE III

Time: 25–RSI seconds
Ritual: Prayer
Range: RML feet
Duration: One Initiative Test

Creates a feeling of the presence of the deity. In crisis situations, the effect is to cause ALL persons within *Range* who are not adherents of the deity to test Initiative (Combat 18), modified as noted for success level:

CS: –20 **MS: –10** **CF: +20**

The invocation may be limited to specific individuals touched by the cleric.

ENDURE III

Time: 15–RSI seconds
Ritual: Prayer
Range: Self/RSI hexes
Duration: 10 minutes

Temporarily increases the Endurance attribute of one subject (usually a friend) within *Range*.

CS: +5 **MS +2**

CF halves the cleric's Endurance for *Duration*.

TONGUES III

Time: 25–RSI seconds
Ritual: Prayer
Range: Self
Duration: 30 minutes

Allows the cleric to speak and understand any language at ML75 for *Duration*. If already known, the cleric can make one (1) Skill development roll for that language after *Duration* expires. With CS, the cleric may open an unknown language at SB2 (same family) or SB1 (alien family).

TRUTHSENSE III

Time: 15–RSI seconds
Ritual: Prayer
Range: RSI feet
Duration: 5 (MS); 15 (CS) mins.

Allows the cleric to perceive a lie when talking with someone.

MS: only lies of commission are detected.

CS: lies of omission are also detected.

Truthsense cannot force a person to speak to the cleric.

DIVINATION IV

Time: 15–RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer/Meditation
Range: Self **Duration:** One Question.

An attempt to discover the will of the deity.

MS: The character may ask one specific yes/no question.

CS: The character may ask one broad question.

CF: The deity is annoyed by the intrusion and punishes the invoker with 1d6 Fatigue Levels.

> ***NOTE:*** *Some clerics prefer to SUMMON a divine servant of their deity and ask it questions with Divination. A summoned being can be asked three questions.*

CURSE IV

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer/Verbal Declaration
Range: RML yards **Duration:** One skill roll (MS)
Indefinite (CS)

An attempt to invoke the displeasure of the cleric's deity upon one named victim. Curses cannot kill nor be randomly directed. A curse is usually a short, simple declaration.

MS: The victim sustains a special penalty on the next skill roll (GM discretion).

CS: The victim suffers a substantial curse, such as a disfigurement or mental problem (which lasts until removed by a Blessing). The Medical/Psyche tables (Character 9/11) can help inspire effects.

CF: The curse rebounds on the curser.

REVELATION IV

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer/Meditation
Range: RML yards **Duration:** RSI minutes

Allows the cleric (only) to perceive all ethereal phenomena within *Range* as faint, colored lights for *Duration*. The *Summoning* invocation may be used on a revealed ethereal with a bonus of +10.

SUMMONING IV

Time: 15–RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer/Meditation
Range: Unlimited **Duration:** One Summoning

Calls forth a specific denizen of the cleric's deity. Invocation EML is reduced by Aura x2 of the summoned ethereal; the more powerful the denizen, the more difficult it will be to summon. If the ethereal has already been perceived by the *Revelation* invocation, Summon EML is +10.

A summoned denizen will appear immediately with CS, or in 3d6 minutes with MS. It may be asked three questions with ***Divination***, or banished with ***Command***, etc.

TRUESIGHT IV

Time: 25–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: RML feet **Duration:** 30 minutes.

Cleric perceives the presence and location of any holy artifact within *Range*. The artifact emits an ultra-sonic hum audible only to the cleric. **CS** identifies the specific deity.

COMMAND V

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer/Gesture
Range: RML feet **Duration:** One Command

The ability to control/banish all divine servants within *Range*. Clerics can command only the servants of their own deity, but those of other deities may be banished.

CS: Any servant may be banished. Servants of the cleric's deity may be commanded to perform one minor task (GM discretion).

MS: Hostile servants of the *cleric's* deity may be banished. Servants of other deities are not driven off, but will feel uncomfortable and, if not well-motivated to remain, probably leave anyway. Friendly servants may be commanded to perform one simple task.

CF: The servant becomes hostile, or berserk if already hostile.

Consecration V

Time: 15–RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer/Suitable Object.
Range: Touch **Duration:** Indefinite (MS); Permanent (CS).

A ritual to sanctify an object or place. Each consecration type requires a special expenditure of Piety which does NOT increase the Invocation EML. Indefinite consecrations are removed by another consecration, but with a special penalty of –50 if the invoker is an adherent of another deity. Permanent consecrations can never be removed, except by physical destruction of the object.

Holy Water [10PP]: consecrated water, used in several invocations. Three churches use other substances: Agrikans use ash; Haleans use perfumes; Morgathians use human blood. Charges 2d6.

Holy Tome [30PP]: a sacred written work which may grant the reader an increase to Ritual ML. These tomes are rated from 1–12, this being the number of *Skill Development Rolls* they give the reader. Persons whose morality is inappropriate to a deity sustain a curse by reading a holy tome (or even by opening its cover).

Holy Artifact [variable PP]: a consecrated artifact, typically a staff, rod, ring, amulet, belt buckle, brooch, etc. They generally fall into one of two major types:

- Artifact that grants the bearer a bonus of 5-20 when calling for Divine Intervention.
- Artifact that stores a known invocation for instant activation on command. Cleric determines the number of charges to install – each charge costs Circle x 5PP. Hence, storing three charges of a Circle V invocation cost 3x (5x5 PP) = 75PP.

Use of an artifact generally requires some sort of triggering or activation. Most often, this is done by speaking (or thinking of) a particular key word or phrase. Holy Artifacts are safe to invoke only by pious adherents of the deity. Other use may cause a "misfire" with unpredictable results.

Holy Place/50PP (+1PP/SQ YARD): sanctifying a site to the deity, such as a temple, graveyard, site of a martyrdom, etc. The location may already have been sanctified to another deity.

Holy Artifact Materials

Most religious artifacts are constructed of materials which are associated with the church and deity.

Agrik: lava, obsidian, steel, jet
Halea: bells, coins, and jewels.
Ilvir: animal hides, claws, and bone.
Larani: ceremonial weapons, armour, shields, rubies, garnets.
Morgath: human skin and bone, ebony
Naveh: daggers, skulls, onyx.
Peoni: bloodstones, emeralds, preserved flowers.
Sarajin: Amber, Fur, Leather.
Save K'nor: tomes, quills, lanterns, pearls (especially black pearls).
Siem: wood, marble, star-shaped items, etc.

Excommunication V

Time: 25–RSI mins **Ritual:** Prayer/Chant
Range: Unlimited **Duration:** Indefinite

May only be performed on a subject of the same religion who has lesser rank and Circle. Strips the subject of rank and responsibilities within the church and notifies the deity that the subject is out of favor. Deity might not agree with the action and may, especially in cases of impiety or corruption, penalize the invoker instead.

Effects are removal of some/all Piety Points, reduction in Ritual ML or Circle, etc. With **CF** the Deity is certain to punish the invoker instead.

Exorcism V

Time: 15–RSI Hours **Ritual:** Prayer/Holy Water
Range: Touch **Duration:** One Mental Conflict

Seeks to banish a possessing spirit from a victim. The ceremony requires frequent laying on of hands and Holy Water. The invocation involves ***one*** Mental Conflict (Skills 23/24) with the possessing spirit, modified as below:

CS: +50 **MS: +20** **CF: –30**

Transcendence V

Time: 15–RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer/Meditation
Range: Self **Duration:** RSI hours

Allows the invoker's soul to temporarily depart the body which is left in a state of metabolic suspension. The disembodied soul functions as an Astral Entity for *Duration*. See: p16 for effects.

ETHEREALS

Between this world (Kethira) and the next (Yashain) stands a shadowy "half world" known by many names, but most often as the *Astral Plane* or the *Spirit World*. Ethereals are spiritual entities, capable of existing on this Astral Plane, and moving between it and Kethira or Yashain. Kethira, Yashain, and the Astral Plane all exist in the same or nearby physical space.

ETHEREAL TYPES

Ethereals generally fit into three broad categories:

[1] Astrals

An astral is a disembodied spirit, typically created by the use of the *Disembodiment* psionic talent or the *Transcendence* ritual invocation. An astral maintains strong empathy with its own body because it must leave at least a portion of its Aura behind to avoid death. Because of this link, an astral entity always knows the distance and direction to its native body, and is always aware of any in the status of that body.

A vacated body is comatose in a state of metabolic suspension. The body is subject to normal physical injury and can die during the absence of its astral. Should this occur, the resident and astral portions of Aura will immediately dissolute and reform as one entity in double the normal time.

An astral may return and repossess its own (living) body without difficulty, but a Shock Roll is required with all fatigue accumulated in the ethereal state. An astral may also return to find its body has been possessed by an alien spirit.

[2] Shades (Ghosts)

A shade is created when:

1. The physical body of an astral traveler dies.
2. A character dies without Divine Grace and the spirit is unclaimed by any of the gods.
3. A character dies in circumstances which require a "great wrong" to be righted before the spirit can "rest."

A shade may wander the world(s), but [illegible] often haunts the scene of its death until the "great wrong" is righted, or they are admitted to an afterlife by one of the gods.

[3] Natural Ethereals

These are entities whose natural state is ethereal. They originate on the Astral Plane, most often by powerful sorcery or divine will, but may have a physical form on some other plane. Divine and semi-divine entities are natural ethereals, as are most elementals.

Some entities are able to de-materialize their physical bodies and become entirely ethereal by an act of will, or by arcane means. De-materialization has the advantage of avoiding the risks of leaving a body behind while the spirit travels.

This ability is evidence for the view, held by many scholars, that the mortal body is simply a convenient physical manifestation of the immortal Aura. This theory, if true, means that all creatures are really natural ethereals because their immortal state is ethereal.

Astral Planes

Although usually referred to in the singular, the Astral Plane is really an almost infinite number of shifting and overlapping planes. Although movement between astral planes is almost instantaneous, only divine entities can hope to navigate this "ethereal maze" with any degree of speed or accuracy.

Frooshing

Passing through solid objects is called "frooshing". For many ethereals, this is unpleasant and/or tiring. A corporeal creature "frooshed" by an ethereal usually experiences an eerie, shivering sensation.

ETHEREAL ATTRIBUTES

Ethereals have no physical attributes and cannot see, hear, smell, touch, or taste things in a physical sense. They possess only Aura, Intelligence, Will, and all existing non-physical skills, including spells and invocations.

Ethereals have the psionic talents of Telepathy and Sensitivity at Aura x5. They are able to directly perceive and communicate with each other, and with a corporeal entity bearing these talents. Their sensitivity to Aura also allows them to view all living things as a hazy image, day or night.

When moving on the same plane, astrals and shades travel at Move 40 (20 mph) and pass through solid objects at will – which is fortunate since they cannot see any Aura-less objects. Natural ethereals, especially if winged, can generally move faster than this.

Fatigue and Injury

Ethereals are not subject to physical fatigue, but may accrue mental fatigue by using spells or psionic talents. An ethereal may only use talents or spells which do not involve physical action on its part. All EMLs while disembodied are subject to fatigue penalties.

Ethereals cannot be destroyed. They are immune to injury except when inflicted by enchanted weapons, magic, psionic talents, or divine intervention. If subjected to esoteric harm, Injury Levels are translated into Fatigue Levels. Ethereals cannot recover fatigue except by dissolution (below). When a situation occurs that would require a shock roll for a mortal, an ethereal makes the "shock roll" by testing its Aura (instead of Endurance). If an ethereal fails a shock roll, it suffers immediate dissolution.

Dissolution

Dissolution is the scattering of an ethereal's "substance." It reforms in 2d6 hours at the location of the ethereal's physical body (if it has one), otherwise in a random location or plane. When the process is complete, the ethereal regains consciousness and has no fatigue.

Visibility and Invisibility

The natural state of ethereals is invisible. They can become translucent at will, but doing so accrues one Fatigue Level per five minutes. This accumulation of fatigue does not by itself cause dissolution, but will increase the ethereal's susceptibility to dissolution from an aural shock roll.

Possession

An ethereal may possess a live body by winning a mental conflict with the resident Aura. Possession is easier if part of the native Aura is absent as an astral; reduce the Mental Conflict EML to 25% EML if one quarter Aura remains, to 50% EML if half the resident Aura remains, and so on. The losing spirit suffers Dissolution.

> ***Important:*** *Remember that the native spirit (if any) always has +10 to Mental Conflict EML.*

A possessed body acquires the personality attributes of the invading spirit, while physical attributes are unchanged.

❑ Disembodied Psionic Talents

All disembodied characters have *Telepathy* and *Sensitivity* psionic talents during their ethereal state. These talents are dormant in **all** creatures with Aura.

Each time a disembodiment occurs, Telepathy and Sensitivity MLs increase by 1d2 points until they are activated at ML21+. See PSIONICS 3.

Astral Skills

The astrals of disembodied characters have a special penalty to the MLs of all skills, spells, and psionic talents equal to the portion of Aura they leave with the body. That is, if 10% of Aura is left behind, Astral skills are reduced by 10%, and if 20% of Aura is left behind, then Astral skills are reduced by 20%. Some astral travellers prefer to leave larger portions of their Aura behind to give their body a better chance of resisting possession by an alien spirit.

Remember: a 20% penalty for ML 80, is –16, and not –20.

Ethereal Movement

Kethira, Yashain, and the Astral Planes all exist in the same or nearby physical space. Movement *between* these planes is almost instantaneous, assuming the traveller knows the paths to take which is never easy given the ever-shifting nature of the Astral planes. An ethereal move applies only to movement on the *same* plane.

Possession

The risk of having a stranger establish squatter's rights in the "temple of one's body" is one of the greater hazards of astral travel. From an astral's perspective, this is akin to breaking into someone's house, eating the food, drinking the wine, trying on the clothes, beating the servants, and bedding the spouse.

A vanquished native spirit may attempt to regain its own body with a new Mental Conflict after the normal period of Dissolution. An ongoing struggle between the invading and native spirit may cause further personality switches.

Zombies

Ethereals may also possess the body of a recently dead creature, thus creating a *Zombie*.

THE AFTERLIFE

Characters eventually die, hopefully heroically, or peacefully in bed at an advanced age. Kethirans have widely varying views on the nature of the afterlife. Laranians, for example, believe they go to Dolithor to fight the good fight for their goddess, while Save K'norians become scribes at Inor Teth. But all religions agree on the following.

The Soul

Each character has a soul, the non-physical portion of the person, in game terms the INT, WIL, and AUR. When the body dies, the soul journeys to its afterlife. Most characters commit their soul to one god who takes possession of the soul upon the death of the character. Those who die godless, or out of Divine Grace with their god, embark on a Death Journey unless "saved" by a funeral rite.

Funeral Rites

All clerics are taught *Passage of the Soul*, a funeral ritual to help a soul make a swift journey to its afterlife. Although funerals vary from church to church and from region to region, the basic pattern is the same; a priest of shaman performs the ritual to get the attention of the god. Then the priest orchestrates a prayer (often sung) to confer a state of Divine Grace upon the deceased by gathering additional Piety Points from the attendees. Those who do not attain sufficient piety for Divine Grace are on their own as they make the Death-Journey.

The Death Journey

The Death-Journey can be long and fraught with peril, depending upon how far a character is out of Divine Grace. The Death-Journey may be played out as a one-on-one adventure with the player of the departed character.

The Death-Journey is a series of encounters which continue until the unclaimed soul acquires sufficient piety for Divine Grace (RML piety) or until it is captured and taken to a deity. Generate encounters on the Death-Journey Table (sidebar). Each encounter automatically starts hostile, although it need not end that way, and the character might even gain an ally to escort him on his Death-Journey.

Use the Mental Conflict rules (Skills 23-24) to resolve encounters along the Death-Journey. If the character defeats an ethereal of the same species, it can take possession of the physical body (if any) and end the Death-Journey.

THE DEATH JOURNEY

1d100	Encounter
01-30	Ghost
31-70	Demigod/Demon
80-85	Ilsiri
86-94	Ethereal Ivashu
95-97	Ethereal human
98-00	Ethereal Sindarin

Ghost: souls that have not completed their Death-Journey. They may wait in one place performing what acts they can to build the Piety Points they need to make their journey. Ghosts may help or hinder the journeyer. The winner of any mental conflict steals one half of the loser's piety.

Demigod: a random (1d10 in alphabetical order) servitor of one of the gods. The demigod will immediately engage in Mental Conflict. If successful, the demigod brings the lost soul to its master. If the random demigod is a servant of the lost soul's deity, the soul is admitted to its afterlife.

Ilsiri may help or hinder the journeyer, but their behavior is alien to humans. See: Siem 3.

Ethereal Ivashu: Ilvir has some Ivashu that roam the ethereal world, gathering souls for use in his creations. They always engage in mental conflict.

Ethereal Human: A human shaman or Shek Pvar in an ethereal state. May help or hinder the journeyer.

Ethereal Sindarin: will always help journeyer, after an initial challenge or contest to test the mettle of the journeyer.

TRIBAL DEITIES

While some deities worshipped by tribal nations are independent demigods, several are really aspects of the Lesser Gods. The Lesser Gods appear in different guises to different peoples. Since the needs of a tribal community are different from those of a civilized nation, the Lesser God may show or be seen in a radically different face by their tribal worshippers. The practical effect of this is that shamans of gods like K'orr have different invocations from those of civilized priests of Ilvir. In some cases, they are unaware that the two deities are one and the same.

Animism & Totemism

In *HârnMaster*, 'animism' refers to the worship of ethereals rather than deities. Most tribal religions include an element of animism, even if they worship a specific deity. Spirits are much less powerful than deities, sometimes on a level with humans. This puts the animist shaman on a different footing to the civilized priest. Power is gained from spirits by bargaining, or in some cases by capturing or tricking them to help.

Animist religions are concerned with matters directly affecting survival, such as staving off disease, famine, or enemies. Killing an animal may cause its spirit to visit bad luck on the hunter, so warding spells and charms are common. Many such taboos have no apparent practical purpose, perhaps because the tribesmen have misinterpreted the demands of their deity.

Totemism is a special type of animism in which the worshipper takes on some of the properties of a particular entity - usually an animal, but sometimes a natural phenomenon. The entity chosen is always a useful one, often a fierce and strong animal seen as more powerful than an unassisted human. Lions, Wolves, and Bears are common totems, as are Whales and Eagles among some tribes. Thus, the totemist (sometimes an entire clan) becomes stronger by emulating it. Totems may be treated as demigods providing specific benefits to their followers. The interaction between individuals or groups with different totems is governed by strict social rules and rituals.

Eder

During the Natal Wars, many Lesser Gods were slain or imprisoned in the struggle for divine dominance. Eder was a god expelled from the "high forest of the undamned" and imprisoned in a huge cave beneath the ocean. The Gulf of Ederwyn lying to the south of Hârn is named after the captive god. Locals say that Eder's endless struggles to escape cause the rough seas of this gulf.

The sea-faring peoples along Hârn's southern coast worship aspects of Eder. The different lifestyles of the three tribes has resulted in the god's attributes varying between the tribes, although the invocations available to their shamans are similar. None of the three tribes is aware that the other two worship the same deity as they do.

TRIBE	CHIEF DEITY	Identity/Supporter/Afterlife	TITLE	Morality	Intervention
Adaenum	Manaclir	Eder/Totem/Reincarnation	Olna[1]	05-16	10/51/21
Anoa	K'orr	Ilvir/Spirits/Reincarnation	Shaman	05-16	05/51/16
Bujoc	•••	None/Totem/Reincarnation	Sha Woman	05-16	•••
Chelni	•••	None/Spirits/Yashain	Shaman	05-16	•••
Chymak	Kualthurlu	Eder/Demigod/Reincarnation	Sarfaeda	05-16	05/66/21
Equani	Kemlar	Demigod/Spirits/Yashain	Shaman	05-10	05/51/16
Gozyda	Oyinath	None/Reincarnation	Shaman	03-10	•••
Hodiri	•••	None//None/Other	n/a	05-16	•••
Kamaki	Shadet-Etu	Eder/Demigods/Yashain	Shaman	08-16	10/51/16
Kath	•••	None/Totem/Yashain	Shaman	05-13	•••
Kubora	Kemlar	None/Demigod/Yashain	Shaman	05-13	05/51/16
Pagaelin	Saraen	Sarajin/Demigods/Yashain	Shaman	05-16	15/51/16
Solori	Matasum	Demigod/Ancestor/Other	Family head[2]	05-13	•••
Taelda	Cothllynn	Siem/Spirits/Reincarnation	Tuathar	08-18	05/41/06
Tulwyn	Kekamar	Demigod/Spirits/Yashain	Priest[1]	05-13	15/71/21
Urdu	Kemlar	Demigod/Spirits/Yashain	Shaman	05-13	05/51/16
Ymodi	Wajok	Demigod/Totem/Reincarnation	Shaman	05-16	15/61/21

[1] Have some form of clerical rank [2] Not a true shaman, but has some religious functions

TRIBAL RELIGION 2

SHAMANS

The generic term for a religious functionary in Hârnic tribal societies is 'shaman', although some tribes have their own titles. Their functions vary from culture to culture, many being closer to civilized priests than to the genuinely animist shaman. They accrue piety as do priests, although tribes have a very different approach to services, which may be seasonal or even less frequent. Lengthy communing with their deities is the main source of piety points for many shamans. Most cultures have no offices above Shaman (Circle III).

Tribal societies cannot feed those who do not provide a useful service; thus shamans are less isolated than many civilized priests. Many have skill in hunting or other mundane abilities, while others concentrate on providing healing magic, blessing weapons, warding off evil spirits (including disease!) or cursing enemies. In other cases the shaman's communion with the spirit world is unsettling to the people, and he is prohibited from doing mundane work.

In addition to occasional services, shamans perform ceremonies to guide the soul of the tribal member through the important rites of passage. Other duties vary considerably from tribe to tribe; for example, the shamans of Manaclir (Adaenum) double as the village chieftains.

Shamans have access to invocations, although those worshipping demigods may have a limited selection. Even those shamans whose religion does not include deities (Bujoc, Chelni and Kath) can use invocations. Although these are gathered from a variety of beings, which may have different demands, piety should be calculated in the same way as for theistic religions.

Some tribal invocations are similar to those found in civilized lands, but a number are unique. Usually the shaman must enter an ecstatic state, rather than employ formulaic prayer. Other invocations include prayers for good hunting, rituals to acknowledge outsiders as friends of the tribe (or curses to mark them as enemies!) and invocations that allow the shaman to be temporarily possessed by a spirit to gain or transmit knowledge or power.

Tribal societies seldom differentiate between types of supernatural power. Those with psionic powers or Shek Pvar spells may be referred to as 'shamans' by tribesmen, and may even be granted similar rights and responsibilities.

SPIRIT WALKING (KATH III)

Time: 15–RSI mins **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch **Duration:** 10/30 mins

Allows the shaman to become ethereal. In this state, he cannot interact with the physical world, but can interact directly with other ethereals. The effect is brief, lasting ten minutes with a marginal success, and thirty minutes with a critical success.

This is a common invocation in religions with a strong animist component, and learning it is a prerequisite to becoming a full shaman.

CONSUME ENEMY (GOZYDA III)

Time: 15–RSI hours **Ritual:** Cannibalism
Range: Touch **Duration:** Indefinite

A lengthy ritual (15-RSI hours) to properly prepare a human body for a cannibal feast. Anybody who takes part in the feast gains one development roll in any skill possessed by the meal. The ritual does not have to be performed on an enemy, anybody will do.

This ritual is unique to the Gozyda; although the Kabloqui also practice cannibalism this is more out of need than religious conviction. The Gozyda believe the feast steals part of an enemy soul and makes their own stronger.

GODSKIN (KATH III)

Time: 15–RSI hours **Ritual:** Meditation/Pelt
Range: Touch **Duration:** Indefinite

Blesses an animal pelt to allow shapechange. The pelt must belong to a non-magical wild animal familiar to the shaman, and must be reasonably intact and in good condition. Once the pelt has been blessed, the Shaman may use it anytime to shapechange to that animal's form just by wearing the pelt, speaking the name of the creature three times, and successfully performing the ritual again in 15-RSI seconds. Only the shaman who created the pelt can use it in this way. The transformation takes 1 minute to complete, during which the Shaman is unaware of his/her surroundings. The Shaman takes on the physical form and attributes of the animal, but retains his own mental attributes. The transformation lasts for RSI hours with MS, any amount of time with CS, and indefinitely with CF.

VESSEL OF THE SPIRIT (BUJOC III)

Time: 35–RSI mins **Ritual:** Prayer & Drug
Range: RML yards **Duration:** RSI mins.

Enables the sha woman to identify a nearby ethereal in the spirit world and invite it to *share* her body for *Duration*. The intent is to allow the sha-woman to mindlink with and gain information from a friendly ethereal, but there is always risk of melding with a malevolent spirit.

Requires consumption of a drug such as tasparth to produce an ecstatic state. On a CS, the shaman may specify the precise type of ethereal to contact, otherwise one is randomly selected from those nearby. It is wise to ensure that the sha woman is restrained in some way, lest a malevolent spirit wanders by seek a joy ride.

The Emperor of Flame,
Immortal Warlord of Balgashang,
Lord of the Four Horsemen,
Master of the V'hir,
Breeder of Plague, Squalor, and Decay,
The Reasonless Reaper,
Tyrant of the Foul Chamber,
He Who Knows the 10,000 Ways.

Agrik is the evil god of war; the breeder of violence for its own sake. He is a deity for those who enjoy rapine, pillage, cruelty, and destruction. Agrik is worshiped by dozens of squabbling sects, each sponsoring its own fighting order.

Agrik's element is fire. He was a servant of Manrasusha, the amoral First God of primal fire, he who cleanses yet destroys, comforts yet kills. Early dogma saw Agrik as the one who nurtured and appeased Manrasusha through mortal sacrifice, a service that saved Kelestia. Considering the general indifference of the First Gods, it is more likely that the blood of mortals sated the thirst of Agrik rather than the wrath of Manrasusha.

Agrik is most commonly portrayed as a mighty humanoid figure shrouded in crimson flame, with leathery, scalloped wings, razor sharp claws, and cloven hooves. Two claws were severed from his left hand by the goddess Larani in an ancient duel. Agrik will never forgive this indignity. Only the terms of the Concordat of the Illimitable Tome deter him from seeking revenge. Some believe that he will eventually attempt to assassinate the goddess regardless of the consequences. The enmity carries over to mortal followers of both deities. Otherwise, Agrikans loot, pillage, ravage, and torture without religious discrimination.

Agrik is one of the greatest warriors of the gods, although known for his unchivalrous methods. His favorite weapons are *Gashang*, a flaming mace capable of inflicting "the myriad voices of pain"; *Sycanus*, the sickle with which he cuts the hearts and souls of men from their bodies; and *Armahnh*, a great whip which strikes the ground with the sound of thunder.

Theological Mission

The mission of the church of Agrik on Kethira is two-fold: the bloodthirsty rituals appease Manrasusha and stave off the destruction of Kethira, and the constant battle trains warriors for the endless battle on Yashain. Their actions on this world prepare them for the afterlife and eventual victory over the forces of Larani and her allies.

Social Mission

The Agrikan Church draws all kinds of bullies, psychopaths, and violent criminals into its ranks, as well as "regular" men and women. Within the established church and the fighting orders, people who would be outlaws in their own cultures find a place to thrive and to excel alongside those who could be successful in any environment. The Pamesani Games offer bloodsport to delight the masses and provide revenue for the church. This helps to ensure a steady demand for the slave markets.

ORIGINS OF THE CHURCH

Ilpylen the Prophet

Ilpylen was a warrior of the Kuldrh tribe, whose village lay on the slope of a dormant volcano somewhere in the heart of Lythia. Around 1500 BT, the volcano became active, threatening to destroy the village. The Kuldrh chieftain, who viewed Ilpylen as a threat, took the opportunity to rid himself of his rival by convincing the tribe that a human sacrifice was required to save the village. Ilpylen was driven up the mountain path with a half-dozen spears at his back and cast into the crater. An hour later the volcano erupted. Strangely, only the houses of the chieftain and of the six warriors who had escorted Ilpylen to his doom were destroyed.

Geography

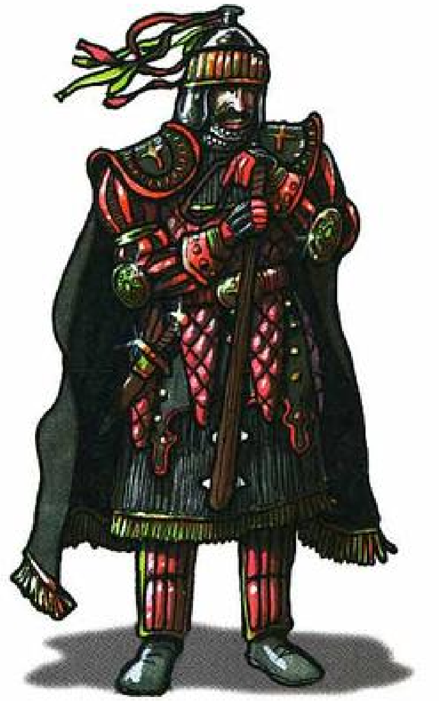
Agrik is worshiped throughout Lythia, but in many regions the faith is illegal and therefore covert. Most Agrikan temples are in Azeryan. On Hârn, worship is concentrated in the Thardic Republic and the Kingdom of Rethem, but is proscribed elsewhere except Orbaal. Wandering bands are still found in wilderness regions such as Quarphor, Reksyna, and the Hepekerian Desert.

Calender

High mass is conducted on the 8th of each month. The *Feast of Balefire* occurs on the 8th of Agrazhar when many bonfires are lit and things are roasted.

Symbols & Regalia

The number eight and the colors orange and black have particular significance for Agrikans. Early priests spoke often of the eight corners of the world, and the 888 (sometimes 8888) cairns, but these concepts have lost most of their significance. More recently, the octagonal pit has acquired particular ritual importance. The original pit is said to lie within Balgashang and opens into the heart of Manrasusha. By the same token, the octagonal pits located in many Agrikan temples are said to open into the heart of Agrik. The pits are site of temple rituals and sacrifices are cast in, sometimes by elaborate mechanisms. Ritual combat is staged on a narrow walkway over the flaming pit.



An Aperagris (Master of the High Discipline), dressed in the ceremonial costume for High Balefire rituals. He bears the symbolic mace of his office, and is armed with the Tazhan, "the blade of the last cut", his sacrificial knife. The formal robes of Agrikan priests reflect the strong Azeryani cultural influence in the church.

The next day Ilpylen returned from the mountain. Some villagers thought they saw fiery demons at his heels. Ilpylen spoke from the ruins of the chief's house, saying that the mountain was a gateway to the realm of "...he who appeases the fiery doom." Ilpylen performed several miracles supporting his claim to have communed with Agrik, including a spectacular self-immolation from which he recovered completely.

Ilpylen recruited eight acolytes to help him worship. A monthly ceremony of appeasement required that one tribesman "volunteer" to battle Ilpylen on the crater's rim; he who fell through the "gateway" was the sacrifice. Ilpylen was a superb fighter. Eventually, the village grew short of men and ceased to be viable. The survivors dispersed, carrying the tale of Ilpylen throughout the region. Charging his followers with final instructions, Ilpylen mounted the summit alone and was never seen again.

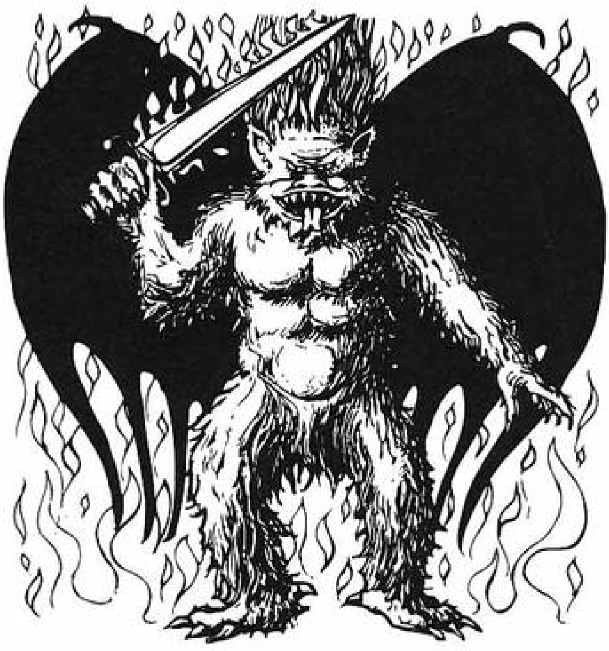
The Balefire Chronicles

All that survives of the earliest history of the church of Agrik is contained in *The Balefire Chronicle,* written by *Moralin,* the greatest of Ilpylen's eight acolytes. From the village of the Kuldrh, the eight made their separate ways to lay 888 octagonal coal and sulfur filled cairns at the corners of the world, to appease the "gates of fire" and to open new ones. Each took a copy of the Balefire Chronicle which contained the legacy of Ilpylen. The eight disciples traveled without haste, letting the word of their doings precede them. Each selected eight followers who in turn founded their own bands.

The Early Church

The early church was composed solely of mendicant bands, travelling, erecting, and repairing the 888 cairns. The idealized band contained one priest and eight acolytes, all with skill at arms, although most bands grew larger and included wagons and dozens of followers. Some bands made their ceremonies public, staging ritual combat in village squares, and offering a prize to any warrior who could defeat their champion. The more aggressive bands were "martyred" for their wanton violence. Those who adapted to moderation survived. Eventually most bands settled and built temples to house their archives and hide their increasingly complex rituals from prying eyes.

Dogma was tempered by exposure to larger populations. To prosper, the priesthood invented spectacular rituals which had little to do with Agrikan theology, but attracted a sizable laity. The temples provided religious justification for those who practiced violence and attracted warriors who enjoyed the brutality of war. The political, military, and financial support of these worshippers was eagerly accepted by pragmatic priests.



Teachings of the Hierarchy of the Eternal Flame

Where did the world come from?

Our world was born of strife. From the Empty Void in the Time Before Time came the First Gods, each seeking to dominate Kelestia, and they created servants, the Lesser Gods, to aid them. And yet none could prevail and Kelestia trembled from the forces wielded. The First Gods then sought a truce amongst themselves. They agreed to leave the conflict to the Lesser Gods who lacked the strength to undo Kelestia. But there was one among the First Gods who refused the truce; this was Manrasusha, the Pure Primal Fire that Cleanses and Destroys. With Manrasusha unwilling, the war could not end and the utter destruction of Kelestia seemed nigh. But then our lord Agrik, servant to Manrasusha, appeared before his lord:

> *"I, the Immortal Warlord of Balgashang, speak to you. I am the mightiest of all the Lesser Gods; none are stronger, none braver. Were you and the other Immutable Ones to withdraw from the fighting, I would soon slay all the other lesser gods who refused to kneel before me. So I ask thee to withdraw, and I pledge my strength will be as your strength, that wheresoever I and my servants go, we shall carry with us your Fiery Essence. We shall open up Gates of Flame on the worlds of Kelestia, remaking them in your image and spreading your Flames Imperishable. Agree to this truce with the other Immutable Ones, for I shall then acquire for you the dominion that you seek."*

And so Manrasusha consented to withdraw from the conflict. Since that day, Agrik has fulfilled his pledge, increasing the size of his dominion, appeasing Manrasusha.

The V'hir

The best known of the semi-divine servants of Agrik are the Eight Demons. They were created by Ilvir, from eight drops of blood that fell when Larani cut the claws from Agrik's hand. Sometimes called the sons of Agrik, the V'hir are much like Agrik in appearance, although smaller and far less powerful. They are often confused with the god by those unfortunate enough to encounter them.

ORGANIZATION

At first, only the finest warriors were admitted to the priesthood. However, the temples also attracted scholars whose bent was toward administration and ritual rather than the martial arts. Eventually, two specialized castes developed: the *Viriahn* (priests), guardians of the Balefire Chronicles, which had become a synonym for archives; and the *Terahni*, protectors of the priests. The martial ideal has survived; all priests are still taught skill at arms.

The rise of complex societies in Lythia was mirrored in the church. The original structure of one priest and eight acolytes remained, but the eight became masters with special responsibilities under a high priest. As administration grew burdensome, additional priests and acolytes were trained as their assistants.

Feudalism provided a model for the Terahni. The priests organized their warriors into fighting-orders. When a temple prospered it founded new houses; sometimes control was maintained, more often the new temple declared independence. Since most temples have their own Terahni, bloodshed is common.

In addition to the numerous philosophical differences that foster disputes, Agrikanism attracts men as much concerned with power as with theology. Competition between orders and temples is accepted, even encouraged. Violence is perceived as an act of worship in itself. No adherent can make a greater sacrifice than his own life.

THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY

The fractious origins of the Agrikan temples long prevented the establishment of a central authority. However, by 300 TR, the temple of Lysara had come to dominate the Agrikan church throughout most of the Azeryani Empire and extended that supremacy over the next two centuries. This temple, located on the edge of the Azeryani Drylands, has grown into a city dedicated to Agrikanism and is largely independent of imperial authority.

THE AMANASURIF (The Pontiff)

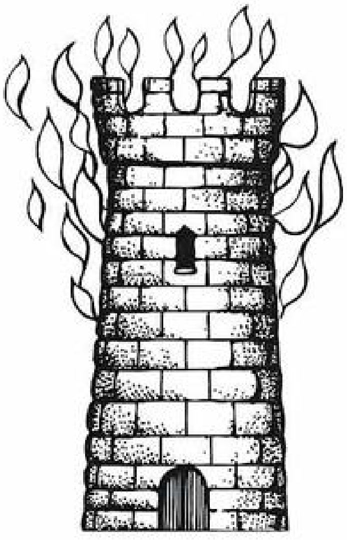
The most powerful priest of Agrik dwells in Lysara where he is a powerful secular lord, collecting revenues from temples and other church properties throughout Azeryan and the rest of Lythia. Most Agrikans acknowledge that he has a special relationship with the deity, but not all recognize his infallibility.

THE HIGH CURCUNO (Senior Cardinals)

The High Curcuno serves as a kind of pontiff's cabinet. Its eight members advise the Amanasurif and are the government of the church estates. They are chosen by the pontiff from the Low Curcuno. When the pontiff dies, his successor is most often one of the High Curcuno.

THE LOW CURCUNO (Cardinals)

The Low Curcuno consist of all primates and bishops, and enough temporary appointees to bring the number to eighty eight. When the pontiff dies, the Low Curcuno elects his successor. Such occasions are also used to review the church's evangelical and secular policies. Most offices in the government of Lysara and the church estates are filled by members of the Curcunos who therefore head both the secular and sacred bureaucracy.



Pameshlu

Demon Pameshlu the Insatiable is Agrik's chief underling. He is the lord of frenzy and excess, and his appetite for blood is unrivaled. He is commonly portrayed as an ordinary human in lacquered black armour, bearing his broadsword, Emyn, and his shield, Okayra. The Pamesani Games are named for him.

Canon Law

The church of Agrik settles most internal disputes by dueling. If temple policy is involved, affecting the higher priesthood, a hearing before the high priest or Grandmaster may be called. Decisions tend to be summary and fatal. The Pamesani arena is used, whenever possible, for the resolution of such issues.

SURIKAL (The Secret Tongue)

The church of Agrik has taken pains to conserve its own private language. Originally based on Kuldrh, Surikal is intentionally complex and irregular. There are no texts on Surikal; knowledge is passed verbally from one generation to the next. Although dozens of dialects have arisen, Surikal is a common language by which all Agrikans can communicate to some degree. Agrikan rituals are closely associated with mastery of Surikal; the more grammar and vocabulary an individual knows, the greater his ability to perform rituals. The laity are taught enough to respond appropriately to the cants of priests.

Balgashang & Ak-Syt

Agrik dwells in his great fortress of Balgashang among his attendant V'hir. Somewhere within the castle is Ak-Syt, the dreaded chamber of tortures. The fortress' location is uncertain. Some priests believe it exists at the fiery heart of Kethira, but the majority hold that it is located on Yashain.

REGIONAL AUTHORITY

The church of Agrik divides the known world into primacies and bishoprics. Primates and bishops are the pontiff's voice, and (theoretically) the supreme authority within their jurisdictions. The wealth and power of these officials depends on the number of adherents in the region, the legal status of the church, and so on. The autonomy of the region is usually a function of its distance from Lysara.

APALANKH (Primate)

A Primate is generally responsible for the Agrikan church of an entire country. In some cases, several countries are grouped into a single primacy, as is the case with the nations of Hârn. The primate is usually allowed to appoint bishops, and may also select the high priests of the temples in his primacy.

KEMELRAS (Bishop)

A bishop is the governor of a subprimacy containing one or more temples. Some bishops hold many temples and are wealthier than primates. The power of the bishop is in inverse proportion to that of his primate. If the primate (and temples) are weak, the bishop may freely appoint his own followers to vacant positions. Otherwise, the primate usually takes a major role in selections.

ULANKH (Mendicant Priest)

Ulankhi are mendicant Aperani appointed by members of the High and Low Curcuno, or the pontiff, who serve as spies, inspectors, and emissaries. Their status depends on who appoints them. Some hold offices within the primacy, bishopric, or central bureaucracy. Members of the priesthood who serve well may be made Ulankh and given license to wander freely. Often, they are created to ease the burden on the church resources, since, while an Ulankh may receive food and accommodation at any temple, he may not remain for more than eight days and nights in any month. Ulankhi usually renounce any connection with a temple or order; their allegiance is directly to the pontiff (in practice, more often to their appointer).

What of the other Gods?

Tell me the Truth about...

Halea is the Whore of Heaven. She pursues pleasure the way merchants grasp gold. With temptations of wealth and sex, she bewitches the minds of the mighty, turning them into her slaves. Do not be fooled by her charms. True strength comes from will and courage, not from coins and sated loins.

Ilvir the Craven Lord hides in the pits of Araka-Kalai, too weak to stand against our Warlord of Balgashang. Agrik would have destroyed The Worm long ago were it not for the usefulness of his art. At our Lord's command, the Craven One created the V'hir, just as he still creates monsters for our arenas. Ilvir and his minions can be ignored, for now.

Larani, the Bitch of Dolithor, antagonizes our Warlord at every turn. Her 'chivalry' is an attempt to subvert the natural order. Her followers must be fought at every opportunity, by whatever means necessary. Our Warlord rejoices when her servants are put to death, but rejoices even more when they are persuaded, by any means, to renounce her and acknowledge Him instead.

Morgath seized Bukrai and used its power to destroy his foes. But the *Orb that Cannot Be Viewed* is stronger than Morgath, and he has become its slave. The Slave of Bukrai has been a willing ally on more than one occasion: it was he who sent Dhivu. While Morgath's followers aid us, we work with them.

Naveh skulks in the shadows, hoping to accomplish there what he lacks the strength to do openly. Shadows offer concealment only until the bright fires of rage burn them away. Then Naveh and his followers will be crushed as insects under a rock. Do not hesitate to turn their methods against them.

Peoni is an old woman. Once strong, she has pledged herself to weakness. She chooses her followers from the most useless wretches of humanity. Peoni does no harm; her followers can be safely ignored in favor of real enemies. However, it is good practice to remind her worshippers just how lowly they are.

Sarajin refuses his rightful place at our Lord's side. The followers of the Gray Slayer share their master's ignorance. Barbarians, they cling to old customs, like the crippling absurdity they call the 'Ljarl'.

Save-K'nor wastes time gathering useless facts long past the time for action. This does not trouble our Lord. In the end, our dominion will be achieved by powers that Save-K'nor and his pale followers cannot comprehend. Those who serve the Sage of Heaven may be ignored.

Siem is in his twilight years. He lacks the courage to oppose Agrik, just as he failed to seize Bukrai from Morgath. Siem has retired to a Dream Realm, where he and his followers reminisce about times long since passed. At length, Lord Agrik will awaken the dreamers, enslave the useful, and eliminate the rest.

TEMPLE HIERARCHY

The responsibilities of the priests within a temple vary; this is an idealized model.

THE VIRIAHN (High Priest)

The High Priest is the master of the temple. In regions with strong central authority, the Viriahn is appointed by the bishop. Elsewhere, the High Priest is elected for life by the temple masters.

THE APERANI (Masters)

There are usually eight masters, each with his own area of concern. Most masters find their spheres overlapping those of some colleagues and competition is ceaseless, although often covert. The Aperani are appointed by the High Priest.

THE HERUCHAI (Lieutenants)

The number of Heruchai varies from one temple to another. They rank between acolyte and master and are assigned to one of the Aperani. A lieutenant of the Aperterahn would be called an Aperterahnherucha, for example. Appointments are made by the High Priest with advice from the Masters of Acolytes and High Discipline. Many Heruchai spy on their masters for other Aperani. The assignment and covert recruitment of Heruchai is one of a temple's most complex and dangerous games. The Aperani with the most loyal Heruchai is the likely successor to the High Priest.

THE TERAHNI (Warriors)

Warriors in the service of the church. Their role is to protect the members of the clergy who are less proficient in their martial abilities.

THE AGNICHARI (Acolytes)

Agnichari usually enter the church between ages 13 – 18. They are recruited by the Master of High Discipline or the Master of Acolytes from the laity or Terahni, but any Aperani may have get involved. Agnichari are trained in martial arts and learn ritual and dogma by rote, although most of their time is spent at menial tasks.

Acolytes are periodically tested by the Master of the High Discipline. Tests vary from recitation of rituals to major quests. The Master of Acolytes coordinates training under various masters and lieutenants. Because of the power struggles, most acolytes are forced into the camp of at least one Aperani during their first few months. In three to five years, if he survives, an acolyte is promoted to Heruchai. If he shows skill at arms, he may be transferred to the Terahni.

CLERICAL ORDERS

The Church of Agrik is perhaps the least unified of faiths and this has fostered an unusually large number of squabbling Clerical Orders, each of which sponsors its own Fighting Order. Many of these orders are limited to a single temple, but some have many temples. In the latter case the order will have a headquarters and the priests of this chief temple typically hold the high offices of the order.

A list of Hârnic orders is given in the sidebar. Details on each order can be found in *HârnWorld* or *HârnPlayer*.

SENESHARIL (Clerical Grandmaster)

The political and inspirational leader of the order, most often the Viriahn of the order's headquarters temple, whose role is to promote the success of the order, ensure that its mandate is followed by member temples, and to liaison with secular authorities. The office is more political than theological. Some Senesharil are appointed by the Pontiff or Primate, some are elected by the order's High Priests, depending on the order's charter or the degree of organization in the region.

The Eternal Flame

Each Agrikan temple maintains an Eternal Flame in its innermost chamber. The Eternal Flame is a spiritual focus into the heart of Balgashang, and is viewed as the soul of the temple.

Temple Aperani

Aperalis: Master of Acolytes. He trains acolytes, assigns them to the other masters for work, and helps insure that the temple runs smoothly.

Apervisha: Master of Maintenance, responsible for temple repairs, cleaning and the daily running of the kitchen. Acolytes assigned to assist the Apervisha are supervised by his lieutenants.

Aperphelis: Master of Treasures, responsible for the temple's wealth and special artifacts. The Aperphelis may share responsibility for the armory with the Aperterahn, and is often in conflict with the Apervisha.

Apersuphur: Master of Archives. He holds the Balefire Chronicles and has responsibility for most temple records and written works, but must contend with the Aperagris for jurisdiction over some valuable tomes.

Aperahkai: Master of Propagation, responsible for the temple's relationships with the local community and other secular affairs, although the Aperterahn and Aperhanar also have influence. The Aperahkai commands a number of spies and may hold the ear of the local government.

Aperagris: Master of the High Discipline, who leads most ceremonies for the clerics. He has his own archives and frequently disputes authority and dogma with the masters of the Middle and Low Disciplines. Important ceremonies may be led by the High Priest; this is another cause for jealousy. The Aperagris sets tests for acolytes.

Aperterahn: Master of the Middle Discipline, in charge of relations with the Terahni. If he lacks competence, the temple's warriors may be virtually independent. The Aperterahn leads special ceremonies for the Terahni, and has a say in their recruitment; competition may lead to disputes with the Aperagris.

Aperhanar: Master of the Low Discipline, who usually leads the "open" ceremonies and deals with most lay adherents. The Aperhanar also conducts evangelical activities and may have spies in the community at large.

Hârnic Agrikan Orders

Clerical Order	***Fighting Order***
Eight Demons	*Cohorts of Gashang*
Fuming Gate	*Copper Hook*
Herpa the Mace	*Red Shadows of Herpa*
Kukshin	*Crimson Dancer*
Mamaka the Master	*Warriors of Mamaka*
Octagonal Pit	*Pameshlu the Insatiable*
Pillar of Fire	*Roving Doom*

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Methods of worship vary somewhat between Agrikan clerical orders, but certain practices are universal. Human sacrifice with the *sycanus* is a common feature. In the Middle and Low Disciplines, man to man, and man to beast combat is stressed, but the High Discipline may be more sinister (and less fair).

THE BALEFIRE DISCIPLINES

Ceremonies fall into three groups, corresponding to the three castes of worshippers. Ceremonies of the *Low Discipline* may be attended by any adherent, although few clerics bother. Those of the *Middle Discipline* are attended by priests and the Terahni, and those of the *High Discipline* may be attended only by priests.

Low Ceremonies

Temples hold lay mass on the eighth of each month. They consist of canted, responsive prayer and a real or symbolic sacrifice by combat. Wealthier temples insert pyrotechnic displays to enhance the spectacle.

Most temples contain a succession of eight chambers which become more and more elaborate approaching the "heart" of the structure. Those who wish to worship alone or in small groups make a donation and are guided to the chamber corresponding to the size of their offering. The first chamber is bare except for a small altar and bowl. The last (the eighth) chamber is a richly decorated shrine in which the high priest himself will assist the adherents.

Ceremonies incorporate standard prayer and meditation, designed to rededicate the adherent. Private ablutions are done with sand (powdered lava if available) never with water. Sulfur is often burned in small quantities.

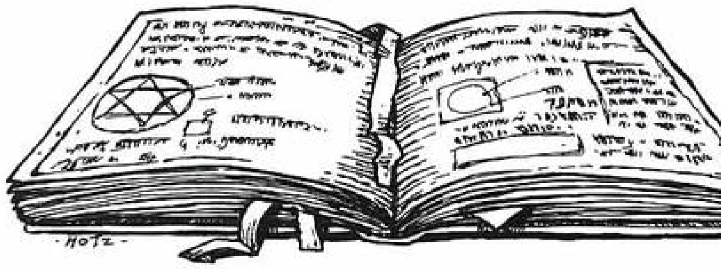
Middle Ceremonies

In addition to private dedications, the Terahni practice elaborate reenactments of mythological and historical combats to renew faith. The members of the order form an octagon within which two or more fight. They will sacrifice speed to ensure that the moves are precise. The Master of the Middle Discipline voices an invocation, and the audience responds. These physical ceremonies are as complex as verbal recitations.

High Ceremonies

High ceremonies also use martial ritual, often acting out battles that are planned or anticipated. Some temples have amassed a series of hypothetical encounters that supposedly portray history centuries into the future. The most significant "predictive" battle is when Agrik slays Larani at the end of the Great Vendetta. Priestly combats often involve the use of a captive or slave bedecked in the garment of an enemy. Such encounters are fought to the death.

Agrikan clergy also conduct a more sinister kind of human sacrifice. The victim is prepared for the ritual by several hours of "ceremonial" torture to the chanting of the priests and then executed by fire in various ways. The howls of the victim, the use of fire, and the ceremonial chanting are believed to be the best method of attracting the deity's attention. A diligent student of the High Discipline will learn as many of the "Ten Thousand Ways" of inflicting pain as possible.



The Octennial Games

The *Ukhila* is probably the world's greatest tournament. Every eight years (most recently in 714) thousands gather at Lysara to participate in the Ukhila. The games last eight days beginning on the first of Agrazhar. Rituals, orgies, and tournaments are held in the first six days. The seventh and eighth days are devoted to "special" entertainment. In the years preceding the Ukhila, a small town is constructed just outside Lysara. It is populated with slaves and stocked with hidden treasure. On the seventh day the warriors divide into two armies and engage in battle. The victors earn the right to sack the town.

The Pakara & Maparas

Each attending order appoints a champion to engage in the Pakara, a tournament to test individual prowess. In the first six days of the games, the champions meet in mortal combat. The final day of Ukhila, the feast of Agrik, is devoted to a mass ceremony in the great amphitheater. During this ritual, the last two survivors of the Pakara meet. This duel earns its victor the title *Maparas*, Warrior Supreme, and custody of *Juka-Melbesa*, an allegedly enchanted sword, for the next eight years. The Maparas, one of the most feared of warriors, must return to defend his title. No one has ever won twice.

The Pamesani

The church also sponsors lesser spectacles. The *Order of the Octagonal Pit* and its fighting order, *Demon Pameshlu the Insatiable*, organize public games in many locales, often building arenas for the purpose. These are far more than gladiatorial events. The bloodletting and depravity seems unbounded, and the games are widely banned. The Pamesani of Azeryan are deemed the most glorious by Agrikans.

Funerary Rites

Agrikans, as one might expect from adherents of the "fire god", practice ritual cremation. They like large funeral pyres, and there are cases of overzealous mourners burning down entire villages and even towns. Once the pyre is built, comrades in arms gather and loudly proclaim the brave and pious deeds of the deceased. A priest leads those assembled in prayer, blesses the pyre, and lights it with a "holy flame", ideally a seed flame from a temple fire pit. The size of the flare when the body ignites is said to be a measure of piety, a belief that is always amusing if a bishop fizzles out and has to be relit.

After cremation the ashes can be allowed to scatter in the wind. They are not supposed to fall on water, so funeral pyres are never located near the sea, or a lake, swamp, or river. Optionally, the ashes can be gathered and scattered at some holy site, or deposited in a temple's octagonal pit for a suitable donation. High ranking Agrikans may be accorded the highest funeral honor which is to be cremated in the temple pit directly, often accompanied by a live slave or two.

Ak-Syt's Peace II

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** One hour

Prevents subject from entering shock or losing consciousness for *Duration* (all Shock Rolls are ignored). Subject may die from injuries, but will not enjoy the peace of unconsciousness.

CF: *Invoker* makes a 4d6 shock roll.

Emyn's Cut II

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch Weapon **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) strikes

Causes an edged weapon to take on the attributes of *Emyn*. Any injury inflicted by the weapon is a *Bleeder*.

CF: Weapon damage check.

Shield of Amana II

Time: 25-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Reduces mundane ***Fire Impact*** by 2 for *Duration*.

Thunder of Armahnh II

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch Whip **Duration:** One strike

Causes a whip to take on the attributes of *Armahnh*. Any strike result with the whip attack causes a deafening thunderclap which earns the invoker a tactical advantage and causes horses to bolt unless controlled by a Riding skill check at –30.

Flame of Gashang III

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch Mace **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) strikes

Causes the head of a mace to burst into flame. In addition to normal impact, the mace causes *mundane* fire impact of 3d6. The mace also functions as a torch and can be used to ignite flammable objects.

CF: Weapon damage check.

Ilpylen's Shield III

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

The subject is rendered immune to any damage from mundane or ethereal fire for *Duration*.

Mamaka's Cry III

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RML Yards **Duration:** Instantaneous

Causes an immediate Morale Check for everyone within *Range*. Agrikans get a a +20 (MS); +50 (CS) bonus.

Pameshlu's Curse III

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Spoken Curse
Range: RML feet **Duration:** RSI/2 rounds (MS)
RSI rounds (CS)

One chosen subject suffers a –10 (MS) or –30 (CS) to combat skills for *Duration*.

Searing Hand III

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/RSI hexes **Duration:** One Touch or Impact

A ball of mundane fire appears in the invoker's hand for *Duration*. It may be used to burn a victim touched, or may be cast as a low velocity missile up to *Range* by using the Missile Combat system. The fireball vanishes after impact. Fire impact for touch/fireball is 3d6 (MS) or 5d6 (CS).

CF: Fireball explodes in cleric's hand, causing 3d6 fire impact to 1d6 randomly generated body parts.

Torturer's Insight III

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Touch **Duration:** Instantaneous

Provides the invoker with knowledge of any fears or phobias of the victim. Invoker also discovers how to trigger the fear. With CS, the victim is more affected (GM discretion) by his fears.

CF: *Invoker* phobias (if any) are triggered (GM discretion).

Touch of the V'hir III

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer (silent)
Range: Touch **Duration:** One shock roll

Inflicts a severe jolt of pain on a victim, who must then make an immediate Shock Roll:

MS: 4d6 shock roll **CS:** 6d6 shock roll

MF: No effect, although the victim feels some pain, and will probably take exception to the attempt.

CF: *Invoker* makes a 5d6 shock roll.

Agrik's Respite IV

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** One Use.

MS: Stops bloodloss and heals one (1) injury level from any designated wound touched by the invoker.

CS: Heals the designated wound completely in one day.

CF: Causes the designated wound to become ***infected***.

Agrik's Rot IV

Time: 35-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Spoken Curse
Range: Touch **Duration:** Cure or Death

Causes an open wound to become infected. See: *Physician 4* for infection and healing routine.

CF: *Invoker* makes a 4d6 shock roll.

AGRIK 8

CRIMSON DANCE IV

Time: 25-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Song
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** RSI minutes

An invocation to produce battle frenzy in a cleric's *allies*. They have a double move for *Duration*, but must select the most aggressive option for Attack or Defense with +10 on all combat skills. Each subject is assessed F3 Fatigue at end of Duration.

CS: fatigue is ignored. **CF:** the invoker (alone) goes Berserk.

FLAMES OF THE V'HIR IV

Time: 25-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) Rounds

Invoker self-immolates and is enveloped in *ethereal* flames for a radius of RSI feet. Although the invoker is immune, any victim touching the fire suffers an ethereal burn (shock roll) of 4d6. The invoker can move with the flames, but visibility is impaired and speed is halved.

INTIMIDATION IV

Time: 25-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) minutes

Causes the invoker to appear powerful, and increases his Oratory and Rhetoric skills: +10 (MS) +30 (CS) for *Duration*.

In combat situations, enemy troops in *Range* have a penalty to to initiative: –10 (MS); –30 (CS).

LORD OF FIRE IV

Time: 25-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) minutes

Invoker can control the direction and intensity of any ethereal or mundane fire within RSI hexes.

CF: Invoker is injured by the fire, suffering a 4d6 shock roll for ethereal fire, or 4d6 mundane fire damage to 1d6 randomly generated body parts.

ARMOUR OF OKAYRA V

Time: 25–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Enhances ALL armour or clothing worn by the invoker, or that of one subject touched. The effect is +2 to all protection values for *Duration*.

BLADE OF SYCANUS V

Time: 35-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch Weapon **Duration:** one strike

Converts any edged weapon into a mundane flaming sickle for *Duration*. Using the normal impact of the edged weapon, an injury of +9 (or more) causes the victim to make a **K4** roll. A lesser impact is treated as a normal strike and terminates the invocation.

CF: Weapon melts and causes 3d6 fire impact to hand(s).

PILLAR OF FIRE V

Time: 25–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: RML yards **Duration:** instantaneous

Calls down a pillar of mundane fire which can be directed at a specific target in Range. Fire will impact three (3) random strike locations.

MS: 3d6 Fire Impact **CS:** 6d6 Fire Impact

CF: Fire strikes invoker with 3d6 impact.

When directed at an object, such as a building, tree, or wagon, ignition is immediate, and the object burns at double (MS) or triple (CS) normal rate.

KHAMAR'S SPAWN V

Time: 45–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer/drop of blood.
Range: Invoker blood **Duration:** one minute

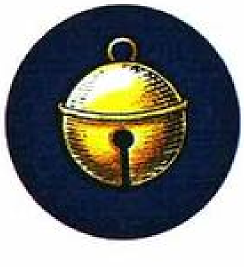
One drop of fresh blood drawn from the invoker transforms into a Fire Elemental. Unless the invoker rolled a CS, he must engage in a Mental Conflict (Skills 23) to control the elemental. A win or a tie allows control of the elemental for *Duration*; otherwise it controls the cleric (or departs) at GM discretion.

GM NOTE: Ethereal Fire

Ethereal Fire does not require mundane fuel; its fuel is extra-dimensional. It tends to be more transparent and less active than mundane fire. In the mundane world, ethereal fire can affect only conscious creatures; it has no effect on inanimate objects and is, therefore, unaffected by armour.

To a mundane creature, an Ethereal Burn is a Shock Roll: if the generated "Fire Impact" exceeds *Endurance*, the victim loses consciousness.

Ethereal Fire burns ethereal beings and objects in exactly the same way that mundane fire burns mundane objects. Similarly, mundane fire shocks Ethereals.



The Empress of Opulence,
Queen of Pleasures and Self-Fulfillment,
Maker of Bargains,
Guardian of the Treasure Hoards of Heaven,
Enslaver of Hearts and Loins,
Mistress of the Stolen Moment Forever Lost,
Unchaste Lady of the Ten Forgotten Arts,
Golden Temptress of the Crimson Chamber.

Halea is commonly portrayed as a perfectly proportioned, sensuous, human female. Her true form drives men mad with passion. Halea has many aspects, among them the helpless maiden, the worldly sophisticate, and the canny usurer. Non-adherents have a tendency to perceive Halea as a goddess of little wisdom, and her church as a shallow and spiritually bankrupt institution, but they underrate this shrewdest of schemers.

Halea is deemed an easy deity to worship, for she demands no conventional morality of her adherents and is willing to bargain for her favors. The highest ethic for a Halean is fealty to the goddess. Traditional concepts of social evil, right and wrong, have little bearing.

Theological Mission

Haleans believe that truth and insight can be found only in the senses and emotions. Reason and will are tools which can be helpful, or can be instruments of deception and betrayal. Feelings come from within and provide the only true perception of the world. The pursuit of pleasure is the only path to fulfillment because it is the only course whose truth can be trusted. Teaching this knowledge directly and by example is the mission of the Halean church.

Social Mission

The church provides guidance, loans, financial advice, and contacts for members, allowing talented woman to rise to socially superior positions. It promotes and caters to lusts of all types, using sexual pleasures to tempt, reward and instruct. Halean clerics habitually use bribes and sexual favors to win support from secular authorities.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Although cults based on hedonism have existed for thousands of years, the founding of the modern Halean church is credited to Merodyne the Pale, the concubine slave of a wealthy Karejian merchant during the fourth century TR. Merodyne, a renowned beauty and accomplished courtesan, was also highly intelligent and astute. Within a year of being acquired by the merchant (whose name is forgotten), she was in virtual control of his estates and had gained a sizable personal fortune by secretly investing "gifts" from her besotted owner.

After three years she had tripled the merchant's wealth and offered to buy her freedom from him. She told the merchant that if he agreed, she would marry him and make him the wealthiest man in the world. Her owner, undoubtably pleased with the current arrangement, rejected the idea and belittled her talents. A month later his business was in ruins and he was arrested for tax evasion, fraud, and smuggling. He committed suicide while awaiting trial. Merodyne produced forged evidence that she had purchased her freedom, and became wealthy and powerful.

Merodyne then used her resources to turn her house (in the city of Livelis) into a palace of sensual and artistic pleasures. She became the leader of a group of hedonistic cultists, and her residence was renowned as the site of elaborate orgies to "sing the glories of the Golden Temptress". Many of these "feasts" lasted for days and cost small fortunes, but Merodyne's wealth seemed bottomless. She claimed that her lifestyle was the result of the blessings of Halea.

Geography

Worship of Halea is widespread throughout western Lythia, but is largely confined to urban sites. Almost every sizable town contains a temple, especially in Azeryan and Karejia. Where temples exist, the church wields significant power. Many wealthy and powerful merchant families worship the goddess and support her temples lavishly.

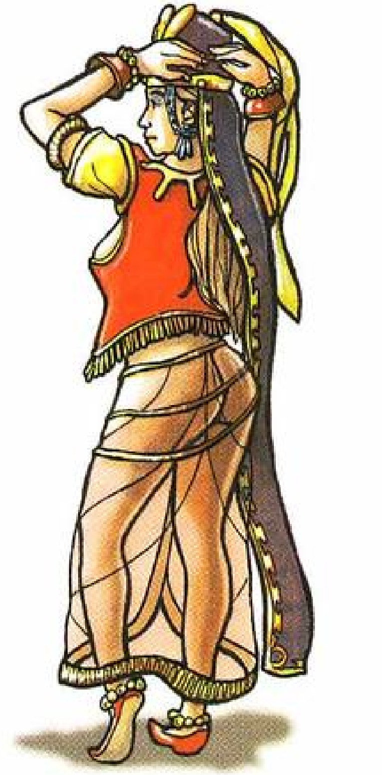
Calendar

Haleans celebrate High Mass on the 7th of each month. The most important festival is the *Banquet of Delight* festival, occurring between the first and the seventh days of Halane.

Symbols & Regalia

The priestesses of Halea dress in thin robes of all colors, although purple, crimson or gold tend to dominate.

The number seven is particularly significant to Haleans, and is believed to be symbolic of good fortune. Bells, stylized genitalia, and coins are also potent symbols of worship. The standard architectural motif in Halean temples is the circle; most temples are at least partly circular in design and the hall of ritual is almost invariably circular or oval.



The priestess illustrated is an Aramia, a Queen Mistress of the Temple or High Priestess. The badge of her office is the design on the edge of the train attached to her headdress. She wears bells at her ankles and wrists which are symbolic of the goddess.

> *"Look upon me, O ye who doubt the wondrous power of the Bargainer. I am witness to but the tiniest fraction of her powers....blessed am I for my faith and devotion. My ecstasies are the merest taste of what is in Her gift. Give unto her thine heart and the stolen moment shall remain with thee forever."*

Merodyne's house came to be called the "Temple of the Queen of Pleasures" reflecting the increasing theological element in her orgies. Her methods of spreading the gospel of Halea proved astonishingly successful. The combination of minor miracles, seemingly limitless wealth, and the lack of harsh restrictions attracted numerous adherents, particularly among the emerging merchant class.

As the reputation of Merodyne's "temple" spread throughout southwestern Lythia, it became the site of many pilgrimages by wealthy libertines, eager to affirm their faith in Halea and pay generously for religious instruction. Merodyne's disciples traveled widely, preaching Halean doctrine.

Merodyne died, at a late age, performing the Tenth Forgotten Act. Haleans consider her the founder of the church and its first pontiff, although that office was not created during her lifetime. Her house is still an active house of worship in Livelis, called the Temple of the Pale. Haleans regard it as one of the most holy places in western Lythia, and it is a common destination for pilgrims.

After Merodyne's death, her primary disciple Aurelia, proclaimed herself pontiff and began construction of an elaborate temple complex, funded by lavish donations from worshippers. Aurelia created much of the organizational framework of the Halean church, and established most of the basic rituals.

Aurelia is most commonly associated with the Temenesa Decree of 384 TR, which ordained that only women could enter the clergy. Largely a formalization of the existing situation, the action was taken to counter the activities of Keser of Beria, a charismatic male prophet who described Aurelia and her priestesses as "false harlots who defile the throne of opulence". Seeing that Keser might pose a threat to her dominance, Aurelia issued the decree after a fortuitous "holy vision". Halea, she said, would only admit her divine mysteries to "those whose form imitates and glorifies Her perfection". Keser soon died of a sudden wasting disease that was widely viewed as evidence of divine wrath.

ORGANIZATION

The basic organizational unit of the Halean church is the urban temple. Responsibilities of priestesses within each temple may vary slightly according to the wealth, status, and political position of the church in the region. The Halean pontificate is located at Helas, a large temple complex on one of the western isles of Karejia. Founded by Aurelia, in 372 TR, Helas grew quickly from an isolated temple into a large town. It includes numerous buildings in which the various enterprises and vast wealth of the church are administered or stored. The temple is one of the most lavishly ornamented buildings in western Lythia.

HILENEA (Pontiff)

The Halean pontiff, sometimes called the "Eighth Handmaiden" is a mighty secular power in addition to being the spiritual leader of her church. As the supreme mortal priestess, she is expected to be an example of "the perfect petitioner", the worshipper who bargains truly and in good faith. Her personal wealth and power, like that of the church itself, are often used to illustrate Halea's generous rewards for loyalty. The pontiff is elected for life by the Tevol-Hilen.

TEVOL-HILEN (Council of Fragrant Gold)

The pontiff's advisory council is made up of forty-nine priestesses whose duty is to assist in the administration of the central bureaucracy. They are appointed by the pontiff who draws them from the higher ranks of the clergy, although any priestess can be appointed to the council. Most pontiffs make some effort to provide geographical representation on the Tevol-Hilen.

CORSILEA (Heaven)

"...a many-chambered keep, of crystal walls and silkened halls, a'froth of crimson color, where soft and luxurious pools effervesce with lusty perfumes and hidden secrets among the splashing of wine; golden passion awaits the soul who rises to the Lady's eyes..."

Halea resides in the elaborately decorated palace of Corsilea. Within its crystalline walls are seven levels. The first five are occupied by devout worshippers of Halea, admitted to Corsilea after death. Their mortal bodies, restored and perfected, spend eternity in the "orgy without end", an endless festival of erotic, gastronomic, and artistic pleasures. The sixth level contains the treasure vault of the gods. The fabled Crimson Chamber occupies the topmost floor. It is here that Halea, her handmaidens, and her innumerable companions chosen from below, pursue unending pleasure.

The Seven Coins

The Seven Coins, also referred to as the *Golden Bargain*, promise wealth to all who follow its tenets. The priestesses teach adherents to divide their income into seven equal parts (or Seven Coins) and spend them according to a basic plan.

Halea's Coin - Tithe thy first coin to the Goddess to keep the *First Bargain*, for all wealth flows from the maiden.

The Magic Coin - Keep thy second coin in thy purse. Spend it not, but work it to earn extra coins.

The King's Coin: Keep this coin safe so that, when the tax collector comes, thyne own wealth will be beyond his grasp.

Sardura's Coin: Give thy fourth coin to thy creditors and learn well the practice of wise borrowing. If thou have been unwise, spend two coins in seven to your debt, stealing one of Life's Coins.

Note: this unpleasant practice is referred to as "paying Sardura with both hands."

Life's Coins: For thyne own and thy family's necessary living expenses spend but two coins.

The Pleasure Coin: The last coin is thyne to spend on luxuries so that thou will always know wealth and pleasure.

Order of the Silken Voice

The only clerical order of the church of Halea was created in 404 TR, by decree of Hasiela II, to spread the doctrine of Halea throughout western Lythia. It remains essentially a missionary order, maintaining temples in the more remote areas of the continent. In most regions where the order is active, it is the highest effective level of church organization. The headquarters of the order are in Helas, a city state in Karejia. The order's Grandmistress is the only permanent member of the Council of Fragrant Gold.

REGIONAL AUTHORITY

Like many others, the Halean church divides western Lythia into primacies. Generally, these correspond to the boundaries of secular nations, although in the case of areas like Ivinia and Hârn, several countries are grouped into a single primacy.

SALARA (Primate)

A Salara is responsible for the administration of the church within a single primacy. Primates are appointed for life by the pontiff, although they can be dismissed by the joint decree of the pontiff and the Council of Fragrant Gold. Salara often have deputies (Ensala) to assist them in their duties. In some regions these are effectively governors of their own subprimacies. Ensala are appointed by the pontiff upon the advice of the Salara.

TEMPLE HIERARCHY

Halean dogma suggests that the seven temple offices are symbolic of Halea's seven handmaidens. It is said that the senior priestesses "make the small service in sacred emulation of those who make the greater".

ARAMIA (Queen Mistress of the Temple)

The High Priestess is chief administrator of the temple and makes policy. The Aramia is also responsible for liaison with secular authorities and other churches. She shares various ritual functions with the Lorisina and Yishvina.

RALITHINA (Mistress of Silk and Gold)

The Ralithina is responsible for the temple treasury, particularly the collection of donations and tithing. In regions where the practice is allowed by the local authorities, the Ralithina also oversees the "rental" or sale of pleasure slaves of both sexes. This priestess is also oversees gambling parlors, brothels, inns, or other businesses owned or financed by the temple. Most Ralithina have considerable contact with the merchant class, and also wield immense power in the temple. They wear a necklace of seven coins.

DESILEA (Mistress of the Luxuriant Page)

The Desilea is the temple curator, maintaining non-financial records and books, works of the visual arts (paintings, sculpture, and tapestries) and non-sacred artifacts. Temple collections always contain significant amounts of erotica. This is a junior position among the mistresses.

KILINA (Mistress of Discipline)

The Kilina is responsible for temple security. She administers the Solithar and is the temple's chief inquisitor. In many temples the Kilina employs numerous spies, both among the priestesses and in the secular population. The purpose is two-fold: to keep a check on heresy, and to gather information for the church.

LORISINA (Mistress of the Golden Banquet)

This priestess leads most high temple rituals, and maintains the temple's sacred artifacts. Her most important duty is organizing the annual *Banquet of Delight* festival, the most sacred celebration of the Halean year.

YISHVINA (Mistress of the Harmonies)

The Yishvina leads lay rituals of the temple. Besides knowledge of ritual, the Yishvina usually have pleasant singing voices and musical skills. Many lay rituals include musical selections said to be from the Melodium Erotica. Since rituals are at least partly improvised, quick wits and imagination are beneficial in this office.

THE HANDMAIDENS

The Golden Temptress is served by seven handmaidens. They are not worshipped, but prayers are often offered to them. As with all Halean prayers, these are in the form of bargains. In most cases, Halea's name is invoked first so as not to slight the goddess.

SELINA, Princess of Abundance
Selina is depicted as a beautiful woman in rich clothing, bedecked with jewelry, and carrying a bag of coins. Although guardian of Halea's vast treasure horde, Selina also represents the spending of wealth. Her name is invoked in gratitude after the acquisition of luxuries, or when spending a lot of money.

ELOMIA, Princess of Enterprise
Elomia is depicted in modest clothing, carrying a scroll or abacus. She is the patron of mercantylers. Prayers are offered to entice her to lend her golden tongue to a bargaining merchant, and her name is frequently invoked over signed contracts and other deals.

TANIA, Princess of Brief Ecstasy
Tania is said to be the second most attractive being on all the worlds. She is usually shown in courtesan's clothing, striking a lascivious pose. Many people offer prayers to Tania when they wish to be lucky in love, or merely to attract someone for a night of pleasure.

GALOPEA, Princess of the Feast
Galopea is shown as a full-bodied or even plump, young woman, holding a goblet or a tray of exotic delicacies. She is the muse of gourmet dining, pleasant food, wine, and drugs. Her name is invoked before special feasts or, on a less formal level, before a new bottle of wine is opened. Many chefs pray to her, even if they worship another deity.

DULCIA, Princess of Harmony
Dulcia is depicted as young woman playing a musical instrument, most often a harp or flute. Prayers are offered to her by artisans before the performance of a play or recital.

THALIA, Princess of Fortune
Images of Thalia show her in mismatched clothing, with wild hair and a knowing grin. She holds a pair of dice and is well favored by gamblers. Thalia's favor is commonly sought in any life situation that requires good luck.

SARDURA, Princess of Golden Wrath
Sardura is depicted in a stern and menacing image, in close-fitting golden armor, bearing a short bow. She is dispatched by Halea when compacts are broken and punishes with 'subtle stings' those who betray the goddess. She does not grant favors, but takes away what is not deserved. Her arrows bring bad fortune on those they strike. Sardura also represents security, and is the patron of the Solithar (temple guards) and of other protectors of valuable goods. Locksmiths offer prayers to her, and she is called on by those who have been cheated or robbed. The saying, "May thou never meet Sardura", is a blessing or a veiled threat.

CORTHINA (Mistress of Acolytes)

The priestess responsible for the training of acolytes. The Corthina decides when acolytes have proved themselves worthy of elevation to the ranks of the Shenasene. She is, more than any other priestess, responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the temple.

SHENASENE (Priestesses)

The number of priestesses in a temple varies with the wealth and popularity of the church in that region. Shenasene are assigned to one or another of the Mistresses, according to their talents. Appointments are made by the High Priestess, with the advice of the appropriate mistress.

Shenasene may be appointed to reside in a secular household to minister to the spiritual needs of those who can afford the service. This requires a contract to support the priestess for at least a year, in a generous and kindly manner. All such contracts also specify a substantial monthly donation to the temple to compensate for the lost services of the Shenasene.

CORATHAR (Acolytes)

Acolytes are usually recruited between the ages of 13 and 16. Most are the daughters of wealthy mercantyle families who deem it valuable to have blood ties to a priestess of Halea. Some acolytes are drawn from women seeking refuge from familial wrath, and some are orphans of outstanding physical beauty.

The Mistress of Acolytes judges each prospective acolyte for their fitness. The prime requisite is attractive physical appearance, although this requirement is flexible with a very large donation to the temple coffers. Less attractive acolytes will soon be taught the secret ways to make a "dull penny gleam".

After being accepted into the church, most Corathar spend at least two years learning basic doctrine and being trained in various skills. This period can vary greatly. The speed of their advancement depends on how quickly they learn and how well they please their superiors.

SOLITHAR (Temple Guards)

Solithar are lay adherents, generally male, who provide security services for the temple and the clergy. Since most have rich coffers, and are filled with attractive women, Halean temples might be seen as a tempting target for a pillage and rape; however, the Solithar are a well-paid, elite group of warriors, quartered on the temple grounds, and it is always unwise to annoy them. The temple guards are under the jurisdiction of the Mistress of Discipline. Solithar often seem to be chosen for their physical form as well as their martial skill; most are handsome young men. It is not uncommon for Solithar to be recruited as consorts for the temple mistresses.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Halean church rituals vary greatly from temple to temple and even from ceremony to ceremony. This is due to the fact that the officiating priestess improvises much of the ceremony as she proceeds. The exact words spoken during a ritual are not deemed important; as long as they include elaborate praises of Halea they are considered appropriate.

THE FALSE BARGAINS

"No other faith teaches the whole truth. Each, in its way, diverts people from the true path to inner fulfillment with False Bargains".

Agrik is a warrior deity. His followers fight for power, for the desire of every Agrikan is to enslave all others. Art, music, and fine food are to be pillaged, not enjoyed. Sex is to be taken, not shared. Agrikans delight in inflicting pain and suffering on those at their mercy. Agrikanism is an empty faith.

Ilvir makes no demands of his worshippers at all. Ilvirans worship their god purely out of foolish admiration. With their temples bankrupt and their priests destitute, this religion has no practical benefit.

Larani claims that loyalty and honor in battle are the highest virtues. Laranians are too often restricted by moral dilemmas. Mindless loyalty serves a master's soul but not your own. Honor is a fine thing if your opponent obeys the same rules. But how many do so in the heat of battle?

Morgath delights in destroying all things that give you pleasure. He seeks to bring chaos to the beauty of creation. Worse, he offers nothing in return except unending doom and undeath, a fate too horrible to contemplate. Morgathians are utterly damned and must be feared and suppressed.

Navehans are thieves who hide in the night. While they have no false morality, their god makes them no promises in this life. They do not know for what they strive, nor to what ends they work. Navehans are cunning, deceitful and dangerous. Oppose them with every means available.

Peoni believes the greatest virtue is to forgive. If some treasured item is stolen from you, will this virtue return it? Forgiveness merely encourages others to take advantage of you. Devout Peonians also seek to restrict pleasures of the flesh outside of marriage, only to suffer guilt when they, as most do, lie with another. And what can be said about a faith that favors vows of poverty. Very little!

Sarajin's worshippers fight for pleasure and hope for nothing more than to die a glorious death in battle. Seeking pleasure in death is strange enough, but it is made worse because Sarajin prizes only this one form of pleasure. That is a fatal weakness for such narrow thinking is a False Bargain.

Save K'nor and his followers claim they are wise, yet in reality they are foolish. They deny themselves sexual companionship, retain a tight willful control over their senses, and permit themselves little in the way of comfort. They perform many empty rituals which serve no useful purpose. The followers of the "Blind Guide" wander lost, puzzling over issues with no relevance to life, talking in jargon that conceals their lack of useful knowledge.

Siem's followers, it is said, take joy in the beauty of nature, yet they ignore the pleasures and bounty of nature. By denying wealth and worldly pleasures, they can never attain true inner fulfillment.

Active participation by the congregation, in the form of canted response, or sacrifice of money, is encouraged. Music and dance are featured, as is the "passage of ambrosia", the ceremonial tasting of sacred wine from a goblet carried from celebrant to celebrant by a priestess.

Certain drugs are ingested by priestesses and worshippers during ceremonies. The aphrodisiac herbs Elprequir and Perigwar are used most frequently, although various hallucinogens and stimulants are often taken to achieve the euphoria that many adherents deem appropriate to the worship of the Empress of Opulence.

Chambers are available in most temples for those adherents who wish to worship privately. A special donation to the temple, called "the Bargainer's tithe" is required for this service. Adherents may worship alone or be assisted by a priestess, if their donation is large enough.

Shesneal Rituals

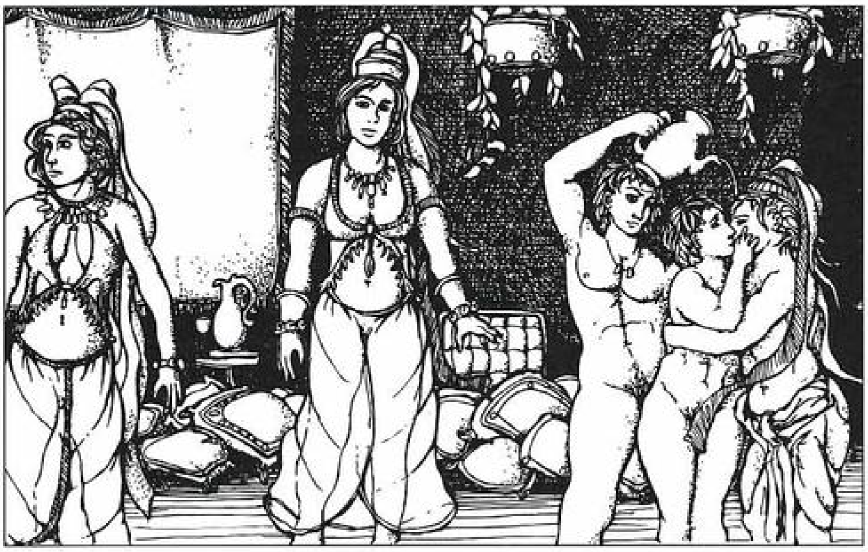
The monthly lay mass is held on the 7th day of each month, called *Shesneala Day* by Haleans. Lesser ceremonies are typically held on the 17th and 27th of each month. The events of Shesneala Day are similar to those described above. The monthly mass is more elaborate and will feature one or more special rituals. The most common of these is the "Great Tithing" in which adherents lay a donation of silver on the altar before prostrating themselves before the high priestess to receive her blessing. Her words of comfort typically include flattery to Halea and the adherent, and advice on sexual or financial success.

The consumption of certain "blessed foods" by the congregation is important. This ritual meal symbolizes the adherent's absolute fealty to Halea and belief in the pleasures that she provides. The dishes usually contain a mild drug and many worshippers claim to be transported to Corsilea after eating the sacred food.

Another rite involves the sacrifice of the chastity of a male or female virgin. This initiation ceremony is usually done on the first Shesneala Day after an adherent's 13th birthday. The Shesneala always conclude with an orgy.

Banquet of Delight Festival (Halane 1st-7th)

This seven day series of ritual and sensualist pleasures is believed to symbolize the eternal delights that a pious adherent can expect to enjoy in Corsilea, the Halean heaven. Public processions and outdoor festivals are common, especially Eleri Plays, which are stylized public dramatizations of aspects of Halean theology. The plays are performed by scantily attired priestesses to large and attentive audiences. The festival ends on the seventh of Halane with a special temple ritual for adherents only.



A Prayer of Sacrifice

O Mistress, accept this offering, and grant me blessings equal to my devotion.

A Daily Prayer

Said while counting one's wealth:

O Mistress, I believe that each coin will beget seven pleasures. Grantor of all pleasures, enhance all my senses and keep me mindful of your mysteries, that I may give pleasure as well as I get, and that one day I may do the same with you in Corsilea.

Legend of the Syverhyn

Once, there was a race of immortal and beautiful women, called the Syverhyn, who were chosen by Halea as her special people. They built and administered shrines and prospered. As time passed, however, men came to worship the women instead of the goddess. The Syverhyn took to wearing prudish robes and practiced aloof virginity to foster the illusion of their divinity. Halea was jealous, and took revenge.

Halea smote the shrines of the Syverhyn and cast them into the wilderness with a curse of promiscuity. They were granted the power to charm and lure mortal men for a one year delirium of coupling to sate their lust. But in doing so, they suffered a painful pregnancy, and gave birth to ugly, squat, horned, hairy, and lustful males, sometimes called satyrs.

The Syverhyn continually petition Halea for surcease. Occasionally she shows mercy, and allows one to dwell with her. Most remain unforgiven, and they feature in many folktales, as do their bestial offspring. Deformed or illegitimate human babies are often blamed on the lustful satyrs.

Halean Funerals

Haleans claim to celebrate the passage of the faithful to Corsilea, but an element of sadness underlies the outward festivities.

Rich families practice mummification and lay their dead in elaborate tombs surrounded by worldly goods. Some families have a beautiful mausoleum built on their estate, typically on an island that is man-made if necessary.

Most departed, however, cannot afford the lavish expense of mummification and mausoleums. They are cremated to avoid the "long wasting" which they deem abhorrent. Mourners are frequently hired to make it appear the departed was well-loved. The corpse is displayed at the funeral in fine clothing and jewelry, but is cremated in a plain black shroud. Money and valuables are never cremated; Haleans know the value of a penny.

Their ashes are scattered in a field of flowers, or kept inside a hollow stone bust of the departed. These memorial busts can be stored in a temple for an appropriate donation. A permanent, prominent temple location can cost as much as 600d per year.

HALEA 6

SARDURA'S VISION — II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Enables recipient to know whether or not a person is lying. It does not indicate what the truth is, but CS indicates the magnitude of the lie.

DULCIA'S SONG — II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Song
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Enhances the cleric's musical skills, or those of another person touched by the cleric. The effect, at the cleric's option, is applied to one of Singing, Dancing, or playing of any musical instrument. **MS:** ML +10 **CS:** ML +30

CF renders the invoker mute for 3d6 minutes.

ECSTASY — II

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) mins.

Causes intense pleasure in the recipient. This is always distracting, and the recipient may agree to most anything that is not life threatening for the pleasure to continue. A laying on of hands (or some other body part) is required. **CF** causes pain for the subject (4d6 Shock Roll).

SILVER TONGUE — II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) hours

Improves Oratory and Rhetoric by RSIx5% for Duration.

CF renders the invoker mute for 3d6 minutes.

CURE DISEASE — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer/Massage
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** One Healing Roll

Helps a patient overcome disease or infection with an immediate roll on the Infection Table modified for success:

MS: +20 **CS: +50**

The invocation *cannot* heal wounds, revivify a corpse, etc.

ENHANCE SENSE — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Touch **Duration:** 20 (MS); 60 (CS) mins.

Enhances any one of the sensory attributes by 3, or each by 1 point for Duration. **CF** renders the invoker deaf, mute, and blind for 3d6 minutes.

TANIA'S PLEASURE — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant/Massage
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) hours

Increases or decreases (cleric choice) the size of one body part up to 50% (MS) or 100% (CS) for *Duration*. **CF** causes the body part to increase or decrease in size (opposite to cleric intention) by 100% for *Duration*.

KILINA'S WHIP — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Touch **Duration:** One Touch

Inflicts a severe jolt of pain on the next person or creature touched by the invoker, requiring an immediate Shock Roll:

MS: 3d6 Shock Roll **CS:** 6d6 Shock Roll

MF: No effect, although the victim feels some pain and will likely take exception to the deed.

CF: Invoker makes a 5d6 Shock Roll.

The invocation may be added to a whip. This extends "touch" to the range of the whip, but requires a strike to be effective. The impact of the whip is a separate injury.

THALIA'S LUCK — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 1 skill roll

Enhances the cleric's luck, or that of another person touched. The effect is to modify any one skill roll:

MS: +10 **CS: +30**

CF renders the invoker mute for 3d6 minutes.

ELOMIA'S TONGUE — III

Time: 25–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Self **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

This invocation allows the cleric to open any desired language to SB3 (same family) or to SB2 (alien family). The cleric may then speak and understand this language at double ML for Duration. When the invocation expires, the cleric can make one (MS) or three (CS) Skill Development Rolls for that language. *Elomia's Tongue* may be used on an open language with the same effects to ML and skill developments.

HALEA'S APPLE — IV

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) days

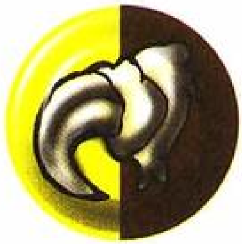
Blesses one apple that, when eaten, prevents pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases for *Duration*. The blessing also preserves the apple for up to one year, provided it is stored in a cool, dry cellar. If five blessed apples are eaten in one day, an existing pregnancy will abort.

SADURA'S RASH — V

Time: 25-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Chant/Prayer
Range: Touch **Duration:** Cure or Death

Inflicts a painful rash (C7/H2) in the victim's genitals that first appears in 3 days. A daily *Infection Roll* ***must*** then be made (Physician 3) to determine the victim's fate. The rash spreads and changes to open sores. Each day, a cumulative penalty of –5 applies to the Infection Roll. Patient is cured at H6, or dies (in agony) at H0.

ILVIR 1



Master of Araka-Kalai,
Brooder in the Blasted Plains,
The Serpent that Dwells Below,
Accursed Lord of the Barren Cycle,
Prince of the Fatherless Multitude,
Craven Lord of Sterile Lands.

Ilvir is one of the least worshipped deities despite the fact he is the only one to reside on Kethira among mortals. Some deny his godhead and consider him a demigod or demon. The Brooder's powers are, however, beyond mortal comprehension.

Ilvir is a shapechanger, taking whatever form suits him. His favorite shape is said to be that of a Serpent, and this reptile figures prominently in Ilviran religious art. Ilvir is a peaceable and introspective god. He rarely interferes with the activities of other deities, or their adherents, and seems satisfied with endless experiments on Ivashu lifeforms for which he is known.

Theological Mission

The church of Ilvir has no single mission. Worshippers of like mind have associated into clerical orders that ascribe to different versions of Ilviran theology. Many of these viewpoints are difficult to reconcile with each other.

Social Mission

Ilvir is worshipped mainly by the Jarin, a culture that has always favored a more mystical worship. There has been grievous erosion of Jarin culture over the past fifty years throughout Hârn, especially in Orbaal. The essential social mission for the church today is to act as the spiritual and cultural focus for the beleaguered Jarin to stem this decline. Some orders are more successful than others.

THEOLOGY

Ilviran doctrine is shrouded in obscure, conflicting mysticism. Some claim that even its clerics have no idea what is going on. Since there is no central authority to standardize doctrine, there is an element of truth in this. However, it would be more accurate to say that Ilviranism encourages the development of a personal view of Kelestia. The worship of Ilvir has always been individualistic. Most clerics are tolerant of each others' views, but there are fanatics who perceive their own visualizations as exclusively correct.

Most adherents share a conviction that Ilvir is the most creative of the gods. Only by ignoring the vulgar and violent squabbles of mortal men and immortal gods, can He perfect his art.

Ilviran Dualism

The predominant school of Ilviran theology postulates that each being has two souls, one that stays in the body after death, and one that leaves the body and goes to an afterlife in Araka-Kalai. The first soul controls the mundane aspects of human life and the second is the creative intelligence, stimulated (or even created) by the deity. Extrapolation of this belief has resulted in the foundation of radical sects preaching that all creatures are the inventions of Ilvir, and that all beings return to Araka-Kalai after death.

Doctrine of the Barren Cycle

Many Ilvirans believe that the Ivashu, as creations of Ilvir, are a higher form of life than humankind. They represent forms pleasing to the deity and worthy of emulation. Mortal life is a prelude to a cycle of reincarnations as these blessed creatures. Rumors surface from time to time, that this cleric or that is an Ivashu.

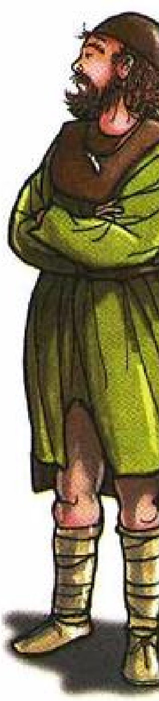
Geography

The worship of Ilvir is scattered widely throughout western Lythia, but is not common except in and around Orbaal on Hârn, where many Jarin have long been adherents of the Craven Lord. There are relatively few temples. The largest are in Golotha, Tashal, Shiran and Leriel. There are numerous shrines maintained by mendicants, dotted about Hârn and Lythia and a few temples isolated in the Lythian wilderness.

Symbols & Regalia

Ilvir is most commonly symbolized by a sundered claw. The origin of this device is ambiguous. Some say that, following the ancient duel between Agrik and Larani, Ilvir recovered Agrik's severed claws and that it is from these that he made his creatures, but the belief that the Ivashu are made from portions of Ilvir's own body is at least as common.

Variations on Ilvir's preferred form, that of the serpent, are as common as the claw. The abilities to coil and change shape are stressed. Abstract whorls and loops figure a great deal in religious ornamentation. The most esoteric symbol is that of the "serpent devouring its children", a portrayal of a serpent eating its own tail.



An Ilviran High Priest of the Pia-Gardith order. Formal robes vary from order to order, but the colors yellow and brown are most common. Based in Golotha, this is one of the poorest Ilviran orders, reflected in the modest attire. The priest wears a pendant of the Sundered Claw, signifying his office.

Ilviran Scholasticism

There is a high degree of scholasticism among clerics of Ilvir, coupled with a tendency towards elaborate artistic design, particularly in manuscript illumination, tapestry weaving, and carving. Most temples have good libraries and many clerics take pride in their artistic skills. Clerics of Ilvir are seldom stern intellectuals; most are fond of poetry, song, and fanciful tale-spinning, but this seems more a reflection of Jarin culture and heritage than Ilviran doctrine.

Ilviran clerics, like those of Save K'nor, are busy scribes. The Ilviran emphasis, however, is more concerned with visual appeal than truth. Just as Ilvir shapes matter, soul, and form to make his children, his clerics shape words, parchment, and ink into a beautiful object. The knowledge to be found in an Ilviran temple covers a surprising range. The library and scriptorium are typically the center of the Ilviran cleric's world. Clerics are familiar with many stories, names, and languages, and the oldest of them have recorded more than a few strange tales. Wealthy families of other faiths pay impressive fees to have stirring exploits of ancestors, typically embellished somewhat in facts, beautifully rendered by an Ilviran cleric.

THE EARLY CHURCH

The worship of Ilvir is essentially a Hârnic phenomenon. The date of Ilvir's arrival on Hârn is unknown, although he has been in Araka-Kalai for at least several thousand years. Sindarin and Khuzan legends ignore the god, except for a possible reference in an old journal fragment found in Kiraz, "...venture never beyond the Rayeshas east, for there is noisome peril best let brood alone". The date of the journal is c.6800 BT, but whether the author is warning of Ilvir or of some other peril is unknown. There are no recorded cases of Ilvir worship among the elder peoples.

When the Jarin came to Hârn, c.1300 BT, there was a group who believed Ilvir had summoned them to be his flock. Their leader was called Ormanoam. He and his followers established a temple which stood for almost two thousand years on an island north of Arone. It spawned numerous independent sub-orders and sent mendicant clerics throughout Hârn until the Ivinians destroyed it in 658 TR.

Contact with the elder peoples modified all aspects of Jarin culture, including their religious beliefs, but many Jarin seem to have retained a modicum of their Ilviran heritage, even while worshipping Siem. After the Battle of Sorrows (683 BT), Ilviranism gathered strength, particularly in northern Hârn.

Influence of the Church

Clerics of Ilvir tend to be disinterested in politics and their church has minimal secular influence. Only in and around Orbaal, where the adherents of Ilvir are relatively numerous, are the clerics respected by local nobility. Even there, the church's influence has declined since the Ivinian conquest. The last strongholds of Ilviran "power" are the Jarin settlements of Leriel, Gwaeryn, and Pethwys.

Ilviran doctrine does not lend itself to religious bigotry, and most priests take little note of the doings of other religions. There are exceptions, however. The *Order of Chuchlaen Wheelwright*, for example, has a violent antipathy towards the church of Sarajin, but this is more a matter of ethnic and political hatred than theology.

Other religions tend to ignore Ilvirans. Since the church is seldom involved in politics, is not aggressive, and does not inflict torments upon heretics, there are few areas of potential conflict. Agrikans and Morgathians regard Ilvirans as natural prey; impotent victims for their dark rituals. Sarajinians and Laranians tend to view Ilvirans as intellectuals hiding from the real world. The church of Save-K'nor believes the scholarly pursuits of the Ilviran orders are specious, confused nonsense, although individual Ilviran scholars have earned their respect. Haleans find their Ilviran counterparts overserious and dull. The churches of Peoni and Siem are sympathetic, although the common ground between the three religions is poor organization, rather than doctrinal agreement.

Burial Customs

Because there are so many different sects in the church of Ilvir, and because rituals vary from one sect to another, there are a wide variety of burial rites.

Most Ilvirans prefer burial in earth where their mortal remains can mingle with the cycles of life, death, and rebirth. The ideal is to be buried in the pits below Araka-Kalai, or as close to there as possible.

There are few Ilviran graveyards or crypts. Ilvirans are quietly buried in the wilderness and, because of their belief in reincarnation, the interment traditionally occurs at dusk and the grave is unmarked.

Some Ilvirans abandon their dead in the wilderness for wild animals to consume. A few sects eat their dead, believing this is the ultimate cycle of renewal.

What of the other gods? Tell me the truth about...

The teachings of the *Order of Chuchlaen Wheelwright* are represented here. Other orders may have different views.

Agrik is treachery incarnate. Although our Lord begot him eight sons, Agrik sought to betray their pact.

Halea The Prostitute of Heaven is interested only in money. She has no creative urge, only the urge to possess.

Larani is nearly as bad as Agrik. She would make all men bend knee to her. Haughty and arrogant is she, and her followers are no better.

Morgath is destructive, treacherous, and spiteful. He steals souls that rightfully belong to the Brooder and feeds them to accursed Bukrai.

Naveh is dangerous, mysterious, never to be understood, and certainly not to be trusted.

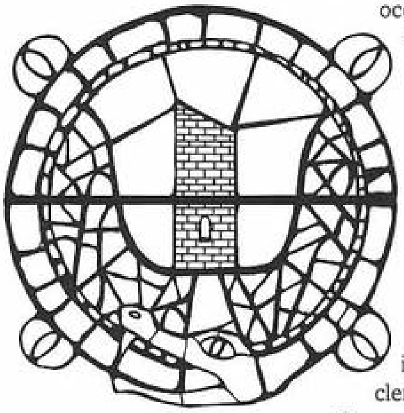
Peoni is a good and pure Lady of Labors, but there is danger in succumbing to her ways. Wherever Peoni is present, Larani is not far away.

Sarajin is hated, accursed, evil, vile! He, chief among all others, strip the faithful of their beliefs, and take dominion over the realms of our Lord. Strike the followers of Sarajin down whenever the chance presents itself; to hesitate will be your doom.

Save K'nor is one we can respect. For as much as our Lord creates things, so too does Save-k'nor seek knowledge with equal diligence. As the holder of the Concordat, he alone can be trusted.

Siem can truly comprehend the Brooder's ends. He is aged and wise, and his creatures, the Sindarin and Khuzdul, can at times be as fanciful as the Ivashu.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES



Forms of worship reflect the individualism of the practitioners. The orders celebrate masses in such vastly different ways that they hardly seem part of the same church. Services occur at various times of day or night, on different days of the month, and restrict attendance in distinct, often arbitrary ways. For example, the Order of the Yellow Hand allows anyone who wishes to attend their ceremonies, including adherents of other gods, providing they are of peaceful intent. On the other hand, the Order of Tuarbalt the Golden Limbed, allow only clergy at its ceremonies.

Lay adherents often carry Ilviran icons. These are often made and blessed by clerics, although this is not deemed essential. Common icons include the "Sundered Claw", the serpent, and the Ivashu. In Ilviran homes, icons are normally placed in small alcoves. In regions where worship of Ilvir is unpopular or discouraged, the icons are hidden or disguised.

A few features are common to most services. A sermon, often in the form of an allegoric tale or song, is traditional. There is a prayer, the content and imagery varying with the order's beliefs. This is followed by a lengthy period of silence, during which participants meditate upon the tale. The creative bent of the Ilvirans leads them to improvise a great deal. Ceremonies have been known to include animal, human, Ivashu, or other forms of sacrifice, but this does not seem to be an official (or frequent) element. In a few orders, Ivashu play a central role in the rituals involving the higher clergy.

Many of the allegorical sermons and lessons by Ilviran clerics use Ivashu as object lessons. One commonly told tale is that of the Nohah, *Sehra-Tu-Yalah*. The tale is not regarded as true and is used purely for its emotional and educational content.

The Araksin

The greatest religious festival of the Ilviran church takes place between Yaelah and Yaelmor, in the month of Ilvin. The Araksin is one of few universal practices. Priests fast for the week preceding Araksin. During the two week festival, various original dramatic works and extracts from the Ilviran mythos are performed.

The Pilgrimage

An important practice among Ilvirans is the pilgrimage to Araka-Kalai. Although few lay adherents can find the time or funds to make the pilgrimage, most clerics make at least one trip in their lives and some some go often.

The Araksin festival is the ideal time to arrive at Araka-Kalai. Ilvirans intending to make the journey gather in Shiran, Tashal or Leriel as much as two or three months prior to the festival. Some consider it to be impious to make the pilgrimage by any means other than walking, although wealthy adherents have been known to make part of the journey by boat across Lake Benath. These pilgrims prefer to demonstrate their piety by walking along its northern shore. Since this involves skirting the Rayesha Mountains in uncertain weather, more than a few have died to prove their points.

Pilgrims usually travel in groups of twenty to thirty for companionship and safety. In 716, a band of twenty pilgrims was ambushed near the Deret River by Agrikan "knights" of the order of the Cohorts of Gashang. The survivors were delivered to an easily surmised fate at the temple of Agrik in Shiran. This kind of atrocity has caused some pilgrims to hire mercenaries or to bribe the evil temples to leave them alone.

Araka-Kalai

Ilviran theology is dominated by the fact that Ilvir is the only deity believed to dwell physically on Kethira. He seldom ventures from his home at Araka-Kalai, although it is also believed that at least the deeper reaches of Araka-Kalai exist simultaneously in a desert (the Blasted Plains) on Yashain, where the Brooder is constantly besieged by various demi-divine armies. The Kethiran manifestation of Araka-Kalai is located in the Hârnic region of Misyn. Also called the "Pit of Ilvir" or "Ilvir's Shaft", the visible aspects are only a small part of the whole. Beneath a crumbling man made tower, there are endless dank caverns, in which the Brooder is said to spawn his creatures, the Ivashu, the "fatherless multitude". The odor is so bad that few care to approach; it is considered an act of great devotion to do so.

Ilvir's Servants

There are a few figures in the Ilviran mythos. Whether these should be properly regarded as demigods, as unique varieties of Ivashu, or as entirely imaginary is unclear. Some lived mortal lives before finding their reward in "heaven". Such figures are often worshipped. Seafarer Ibenis, Sudelrhynn the Bearer of Loam and Chuchlaen Wheelwright all have clerical orders named for them, although only the Order of Seafarer Ibenis regards its patron as central to its doctrine.

The servants functions are obscure. Ilvir seems to need little aid in his experiments, and exercises little control over his demi-divine underlings.

The Nolah Who Fell in Love

Sehra-Tu-Yalah, it is told, became enraptured by an Elmithri. Although immune to the water sprite's enchantment, the Nolah admired her grace and beauty without ever making his presence known. Finally, after many years of watching her, he spoke of his affection, offering some of his finest treasures. The Elmithri cruelly mocked both his desire and his ugliness, and Sehra-Tu-Yalah was heartbroken. The story usually ends with the rejected Nolah seeking death.

ORGANIZATION

Ilvirans do not recognize any central authority. This is in part due to the proximity of their deity; one who dwells on Kethira has less need to delegate authority to mortals. It is also due in part to the Ilviran view that individuals are more important than the organizations to which they belong.

TEMPLES & ORDERS

For the most part, the concepts of the clerical order and the temple are synonymous in the Ilviran church. Typically, the Ilviran temple has very few priests and acolytes in residence, often as little as six or eight clerics. Not all clerics belong to an order/temple; about half are independent mendicants pursuing their own destinies. The degree of their devotion also varies greatly. Some clerics hardly let their religion interfere with the conduct of their lives; for them it is something deep within, to be used when convenient, then put away.

Within the temples, the internal structure differs greatly. The senior cleric in each temple may be referred to as the grandmaster or high priest, but these are not appointed by any central authority. Often the temple seems to function more as a secular economic commune than as a religious institution. The principal objective of many orders is to protect their members from outsiders. Some orders, consist entirely of mendicant priests.

In the settled temples, there are often a variety of officers as dictated by the dogma and needs of the order. If there are archives, there will be a librarian. If the order stresses esoteric ceremony, there will be a priest in charge of ritual. Acolytes may be governed by a particular master, and so on. Some temples keep stocks of "domestic" Ivashu, and these require a keeper.

Where there is a temple, it functions as a repository of cultural knowledge of crafts and lore, and the temple itself may seem surprisingly large for the number and wealth of the faithful it serves. Many Ilvirans spend a few years as acolytes or lay workers in the local temple learning or perfecting a craft. Some simply labor to help support the monks by raising crops, caring for livestock, or compounding inks according to ancient and secret recipes. Any who come to an Ilviran temple are welcome for as long as they stay, eating what the monks eat and drinking what they drink. Even those who do not primarily worship Ilvir are generally welcome as long as they are not hostile, but the strangeness of the church tends to keep the visits of outsiders to a minimum.

Most temples are too large to exist solely upon the contributions of their faithful, who are seldom among the wealthy of the community. Some supplement their income by selling artworks, written works, and potions, while others hire out the services of the monks of the order as scribes. Some temples capture and sell Ivashu to the Pamesani Arena, but this is considered heretical by other orders.

CLERICAL ORDERS

The clerical orders vary in size and in their degree of organization. If it is assumed that at least five members are needed to form an order, it is clear that only about half the Ilviran clerics belong to any order at all. Only a handful of orders have more than one temple.

Chuchlaen Wheelwright

One of the most fanatical and rigid orders, the *Order of Chuchlaen Wheelwright* was refounded at the end of the seventh century TR after several centuries of inactivity. The temple of the order is underground and centered around the Earthmaster site of Gedan in northern Hârn. The temple is associated with elements of the Jarin resistance movement, and as such is one of the most political orders. The order takes its name from a semi-divine servant of Ilvir who is believed to labor forever, attempting to build the perfect wheel.

The Ivashu

The "enchanted" creatures of Ilvir are known as the "fatherless multitude" or the "accursed beasts of the Barren cycle". Ilvir enjoys creating strange life forms, but has at his disposal a limited number of souls which he is constrained to employ repeatedly.

The Ivashu are completely sexless and infertile; when they die, their auras/souls return to Araka-Kalai, where they are reincarnated in new bodies. After spending some time in attendance at Ilvir's court, the reborn Ivashu are sent into the world. Most are quickly slain. Some are captured and shipped away for use in the Pamesani, but a few Ivashu get past these dangers and may be found in any part of Hârn and western Lythia.

The Ivashu are compensated for their sterility by the possession of strange powers. Most species are intelligent and speak their own Ivashi language; others are semi-intelligent, speaking not at all, and operating mostly on instinct.

Almost any conceivable type of creature may be produced by Ilvir, but five varieties are most common. These are: the Aklash, the "Vessel of the Choking Wind", a hulking, semi-intelligent, self regenerating monster, whose breath causes profound nausea; the gentle rock giant Hru, who dwell, for the most part peacefully, in the highlands; the Nolah, the "Dank Stalker" or "Hârnic Troll"; the mischievous Umbathri, who are called the "Bearers of the Mask" because of their alarming ugliness; and the ever dangerous but fragile Vlasta, who move with blinding speed and are called, because of their culinary habits, the "Eaters of Eyes".

The Peonian Heresy

Both Ilvir, the deity revered by most Jarin, and Peoni, the deity worshipped by most Hârnians, are associated with fertility, creation, and the cycles of life. These similarities have led some theologians to postulate that Ilvir and Peoni are brother and sister, or different aspects of the same deity. Such ideas, however, are given little regard by either Ilvirans or Peonians.

Meamyt the Hermit

This "order" was founded in 708 when Meamyt of Pyryn, an eccentric mendicant cleric, took up residence on Askellin Isle, a small island about a kilometer off the south coast of the Isle of Arathel in Orbaal. Meamyt had gained a reputation for prophesy and the performing of various minor "miracles". Before secluding himself on Askellin, Meamyt proclaimed that he had been appointed by Ilvir to ready the way for "one arisen from the Plains and come unto the hearths of the humble". The fact that this statement is obscure (some say meaningless) has not prevented Meamyt from attracting a small number of disciples to his island. There are six clerics in the conclave, living in small stone huts. Meamyt, who gives the appearance of being at least half mad, is still alive, and the few visitors to Askellin are treated to his confused and erratic ravings.

The Ochre Womb

The oldest surviving order on Hârn, the Ochre Womb claims to have been founded over 1000 years ago. Located about a quarter of a league southwest of Araka-Kalai, the priests of this order have always had the closest association with Ilvir's home, and regard themselves as a "chosen elite". The order has functioned for centuries as the penultimate destination of Ilviran pilgrims. The majority of pilgrims never proceed beyond the order's temple to the deity's residence, finding that their desire to visit Ilvir's Pit has waned.

The order built Ilvir's Tower at Araka-Kalai. Originally intended as a shrine to the god, and still visited by clerics of the order, the tower has been slowly crumbling for several centuries. Most pilgrims believe that the tower was built by Ilvir. Priests of the order do nothing to discourage this belief.

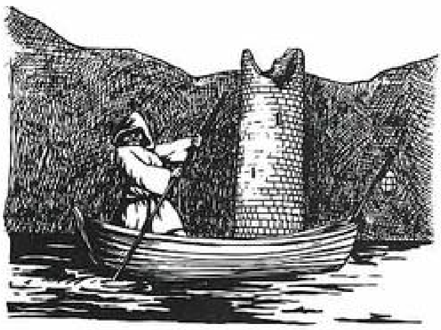
From the temple of the Ochre Womb to the Pit itself there runs a path called the "Serpent's Tongue". This thoroughfare periodically passes stone monoliths called the "Gates of Conception". Carved upon each of the Gates there is an inscription; one who recites an inscription to the Grandmaster will receive a certificate of his devotion. A person who reaches the third Gate is called a "pilgrim of the third stone" etc. Those who reach the sixth stone (and return to tell of it) are held in awe by most Ilvirans, for the sixth inscription is commonly believed to stand within the court of Ilvir.

Order of the Pia-Gardith

The only temple of this poorly organized order is in Golotha. It is involved with the importation of Ivashu for the Pamesani Games. Worship of Ilvir is discouraged in Golotha and his clerics periodically vanish.

Order of the Seafarer Ibenis

The temple of this sect is in Shiran. It is the main mustering place for pilgrimages to Araka-Kalai from western Hârn. The temple suffers from erosion caused by the Great Flood of 707; the temple yard is crumbling into the Thard River. The order provides Ivashu to the Agrikan Order of the Octagonal Pit for use in the Pamesani Games, although they are not the only source of the creatures. The arrangement has ensured reasonably good relations between the two churches. The order derives its name from the servant of Ilvir who is the "ferryman of souls", returning the auras of dead Ivashu to Ilvir for rebirth. Some believe that Ibenis manifests as a humanoid figure poling a boat across the fetid pool at the bottom of Ilvir's Pit.



Sudelrhynn the Bearer of Loam

The high priest of the Leriel temple in Orbaal is the closest thing to a Primate of Hârn, but only because he is highly respected by the majority of Ilvirans. The Order of Sudelrhynn is one of the few Ilviran clerical orders to maintain more than one temple. It has a small establishment at Gwaeryn. The order's name is derived from the Ivashu first created by Ilvir, who, it is believed, honored his creator by remaining forever in Araka-Kalai and performing the most menial of tasks. This is the largest, wealthiest, and best organized of Ilviran orders.

Tuarbalt the Golden Limbed

This small and obscure order is a nomadic band. Its existence is known to few. The fanatical priests of Tuarbalt are cruel and prone to violence. The order was founded in 692 TR, by priests from Leriel, and is now comprised mostly of local tribesmen and a few converted mendicants. The order worships through human sacrifice, and they have not hesitated to find victims among the pilgrims. It is believed that the clerics have trapped a unique and terribly dangerous Ivashu, and that sacrifice victims are thrown to it.

The Verdant Pool

This order is based at a small temple on the outskirts of Tawheim in Orbaal. The temple is used as a meeting place by a Jarin resistance group, who use the clerics as cover for their activities. The *Enclave of the Verdant Pool* draws most of its worshippers from the local Jarin peasantry. It is one of the poorest orders on Hârn.

The Yellow Hand

This also functions as a hostel for pilgrims to Araka-Kalai. The city of Tashal, or more properly the ruins of Kelapyn-Anuz seem to have some significance to the clerics of Ilvir. Lothrim apparently secured a tome sacred to the deity that he secreted in the old city. Local priests believe that the holy book is still hidden somewhere beneath the city. According to their beliefs, the book, called "The Scant Illumination of Vision" deals in some unknown way with Ilvir's citadel of Araka-Kalai. Clerics of the order periodically descend into the catacombs beneath the city in search of the tome. This has occasionally brought them into conflict with the clerics of Naveh and members of the Lia-Kavair, both of whom frequent the tunnels beneath Tashal.

ILVIR 6

Labor of Chuchlean II

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) days

Increases one artistic skill of subject for *Duration*. The effect is to increase the skill ML:

MS = +20 CS = +50

Vlasta Tears II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins

Causes the subject's eyes to weep uncontrollably, rendering him (effectively) blind for *Duration*.

Bellow of the Aklash III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) mins

Invoker's breathe is foul and causes nausea and sickness in those within *Range*. Victims roll vs SML x3 (MS) or SML x5 (CS) or lose their turn due to nausea. Alternatively, the invoker can project a massive blast of air, causing a strong (MS) or gale force wind (CS). This may be enough to deflect missiles, or knockback opponents, at GM discretion.

Communing With The Cycle III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) days

Allows the invoker to communicate more easily with Ivashu by increasing the cleric's Ivashi ML for *Duration*.

MS = +20 CS = +50

When the invocation expires, the cleric can make one (MS) or three (CS) Skill Development Rolls for *Ivashi*.

Feat of Albarra III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins

Allows the invoker to increase any one physical attribute for *Duration*. With MS the increase is by 50%; with CS the attribute is doubled. All dependent skills are affected by +20 (MS) and +50 (CS). Invoker acquires F3 Fatigue *after* Duration. The ritual takes its name from a popular Jarin hero of folklore.

Ivashu Song III

Time: 35-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Song
Range: RSI miles **Duration:** N/A

A high-pitched, unearthly song that can be heard by all Ivashu within *Range* who will respond by moving to the singer. Unless **CF** is rolled, the Ivashu will be friendly towards *Ilvirans*, but hostile to all others. 1d6 *random* Ivashu appear. Species can be generated on Encounter Subtable 15, CAMPAIGN 14.

Guise of the Brooder IV

Time: 15–RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer/Meditation
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** RSI hours.

Creates a were-creature with a *temporary* possession of the subject by the spirit of a creature, typically a wolf or bear. The subject changes over five minutes into the designated were-creature for *Duration*, having the body and physical attributes of the subject, but personality of the possessing creature. The possessing spirit departs voluntarily after *Duration*. An unwilling subject tests Will to resist possession:

MS: Subject tests WIL x5 to resist possession.

CS: Subject tests WIL x2 to resist possession.

CF: The invoker tests WIL x5 to resist possession.

Note: *An unwilling subject is unlikely to be friendly after the mutation, and cannot be controlled by the invoker.*

Ibenis' Withering IV

Time: 35–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 24 hours

Causes the subject to age rapidly. The invocation is used to effect a convincing disguise, or to inflict the perils of aging on anyone. The subject ages one year per hour for *Duration*, and then grows younger at the same rate until normal age is reached. Any subject (even the cleric) reaching 50 years of age, must roll on the *Aging Table* (CHARACTER 22) each "year".

Serpent of the Claw IV

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** RSI mins.

Transforms a staff into a brown and yellow striped serpent for *Duration*. The serpent is normally held and used like a staff in combat, but its impact is a poisonous bite. The serpent can also be dropped to do this work alone. Venom has a *Healing Rate* of H3 (MS) or H1 (CS); 1 minute between rolls. With CF, the invoker suffers a H3 bite.

Succor of Bakyn IV

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Meditation/Tree Bark
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 5 (MS); 15 (CS) days

Enables the subject to ignore the need of food or water for *Duration*. The subject must chew on a small piece of bark from the Orbaalese Spruce during *Time*. Most Ilviran clerics carry a small pouch of bark for this purpose. There are no weight loss or dehydration effects, provided there is at least a ten day interval of normal sustenance between each use.

Ilvir's Child V

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** RSI hours

Transforms subject into an Ivashu for *Duration*.

CS: The cleric may decide which type of Ivashu is involved.

MS: The Ivashu is chosen randomly or by the GM.

CF: The subject transforms to a different type of Ivashu every hour for *Duration*.

Shieldmaiden of the Worthy Cause,
Guardian of Dolithor,
Protector of the Brave,
the Unwilling Warrior,
Lady of Paladins.

Larani is the benevolent goddess of chivalry and battle and the reluctant warrior. Her followers claim she is the greatest of the trinity of war gods, but she is more constrained by honor and conscience than either Agrik or Sarajin. This is a weakness, since Larani will not strike without warning nor without cause. It is also a strength since Laranians do not forget whose side they are on.

Larani appears most often as a tall maiden clad in a white gown with red trim. About her waist and head are circlets of silver. She is fair of face, and strong, although she may not show her power. This is the aspect of the Lady of Paladins. The Lady of Paladins symbolizes the ideals of feudalism.

When Larani loses her patience, she assumes the aspect of the "Terrible Lady of the Flowing Red." In this aspect, she wears *Angcaradina,* her blood-red mail. She bears *Hyvrik,* her red and white checkered shield, and *Avarkiel,* the Sword that Strikes True, also called "Oathbinder" or "Herald of the End of Life".

Theological Mission

The modern church of Larani views feudalism as a pact between defender and servitor and strives to maintain its ideals. These include code of behavior (chivalry) and duty (honor). Prior to feudalism, the religion existed to formalize behavior between warring tribes.

Social Mission

The church offers a source of chivalry, honor, and salvation to those whose lives are filled with duties. Laranians have traditionally come from the feudal nobility, but muster growing numbers from wealthy freemen, especially Heralds, Ostlers, Weaponcrafters, and Yeomen, occupations associated with the nobility and war.

The enmity between Larani and Agrik, the evil god of war, dominates the external relations of the church. Laranians, like Agrikans, view each other as mortal enemies on sight, and this is a prejudice difficult to overcome.

The priesthood stands separate from the knights of Laranian fighting orders. Although most clerics have some martial skills, it is the duty of the laity to champion the cause, while the priesthood serves as the conscience of the church.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Saint Ambrathas of Alamire

Laranian scriptures ascribe the foundation of the church to the deeds of the knight Ambrathas who, it is said, came upon a maiden beset by a dozen brigands. Ambrathas defeated the brigands and the maiden gifted him a red and white checkered scarf. Escorting the lady to her destination, they were attacked seven times more, each time by more fearsome foes, culminating with eight demons. Ambrathas suffered many wounds, but defeated all without thought of retreat. Eventually they came to a hill overlooking the maiden's destination, a castle of unnatural fairness, but Ambrathas could travel no more and collapsed.

Ambrathas lay long recovering from his wounds. He had visions of the maiden transformed into the goddess Larani, but when he awoke both she and the castle had vanished. In their place stood a brooding dark fortress and five priests who had been sent by Larani to help him take the castle from its evil warlord. One of priests blew a

Geography

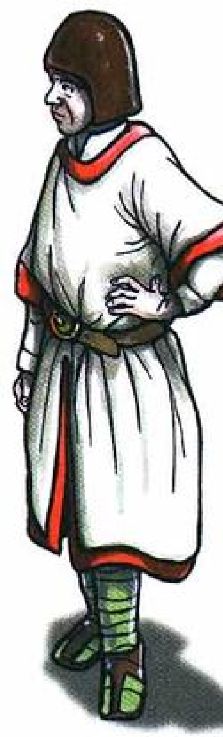
The Laranian church is centered in Trierzon and has extensive influence in most feudal realms of Western Lythia, notably Emelrene, Shorkyne, and the Harnic kingdoms of Melderyn, Kaldor, and Kanday. It is weak in Azeryan, and in the northern realms where Sarajin is preferred.

Laranian Calendar

The most important celebration of the Laranian year is the seventeenth of Larane, the Feast of Saint Ambrathas. This symbolizes the legendary events of the capture of Alamire and the foundation of the church. Temples host tournaments, a special lay mass and night long service by the priests.

Symbols and Regalia

The colors red and white (or silver) have particular significance to the Laranian church. In particular, any red and white checker is symbolic of *Hyvrik,* Larani's shield. The church also uses a red winged lion as one of its heraldic symbols. The robes of clerics, patterned after a knight's surcoat, are always red and white.



The priest depicted is an Obasaran, dressed in the robes suitable for attending the Alamirata. The red trim on the hem of his robes indicates that he is a temple master; simple priests are only allowed red trim around the collar and sleeves, and acolytes wear scarlet collars. As a general rule, the higher the office held, the more red in the formal robes of the priest.

horn and a small band of warriors appeared, calling themselves the Knights of Tirith. Ambrathas led the Knights to battle and defeated the warlord The fortress was renamed Alamire and became a temple and chapter house for worthy clerics and knights.

The fundamental objectives of the early church were the establishment and preservation of the feudal order, the defeat of evil, and the glorification of the Lady of Paladins. Alamire prospered until one day the Knights of Tirith returned and told Amrathas to send everyone abroad. Soon after, a mighty army swept down, and though the defenders fought bravely, Alamire was destroyed and Ambrathas was slain.

The death of Ambrathas inspired the priests and knights to continue their work and attracted men of honor to their cause. From the first, there was a fairly clear distinction between clergy and laity. Priests achieved a "state of grace", closer to the deity, giving them the insight to guide and instruct laymen in the ways of Larani. The priesthood was to be exalted and somewhat isolated from worldly ills.

Saint Perelyne of Tengela

It was not until 227 TR that one person was acknowledged as supreme mortal leader of the Laranian church. Perelyne was a priestly acolyte of the (female) abbey of Tengela located in (present day) Trierzon. She convinced her temple mistress to call a universal congress of church leaders; and spoke of the need for central authority. The suggestion was timely since the evil churches were becoming more aggressive. Perelyne demonstrated a greater command of the mysteries than her peers. She claimed to have had a series of divine visions, called upon the assembled churchmen to elect a pontiff, and then departed.

The congress is said to have deliberated for five days in an attempt to select a leader. Eventually they agreed to leave it in the hands of Larani; they would elect the first priest to enter the chamber. Soon after, Perelyne came into the chamber. "I have brought," she said, "a gift of wine for the one you have chosen." Thus, despite her protests, Perelyne became the first pontiff of the Church of Larani.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Vigil, canted prayer, and meditation are common features of the worship of Larani. Sacrifice, usually in the form of coin or promised labor or service is not uncommon, although it is not usually a formal requirement. Some Laranians donate part of their income to the church, and wealthy secular lords have been known to gift the church with tracts of land. Some of the money gained in this manner is distributed as alms to the poor. Laranian ceremonies are divided into two forms, the Soratir or low mass, and the Alamirata, the high rituals restricted to priests.

Soratir

These lay masses, led by the High Priest, are held on the 5th, 15th, and 25th of each month. There is provision for private devotions within most Laranian temples. Generally these are small chambers with few artifacts except an altar. Worshippers can also make confession to a priest. Confession, and any penance prescribed by the priest, are thought to purify the soul and renew the spirit.

Alamirata

The Alamirata are high masses restricted to the clergy. They are similar to the lay masses but require greater skill to perform. High rituals occur every five days beginning on the second of the month. Many priests often make private, daily devotion to Larani; some of the most devout will even invoke a penance upon themselves.

Tirannon

This lay ritual is deemed to be the final step in becoming a knight. On the day before an adherent of Larani becomes a knight he places his armour and weapons on an altar in a Laranian temple and keeps a twenty four hour vigil over them. During this time he neither eats nor drinks.

Tirithor

Larani dwells in Tirithor, the "Land of the Mighty". Tirithor is probably on Yashain. It is constantly at war with the realms of Agrik and the other evil deities. Tirithor is a feudal state; Larani is the Queen; her barons are demigods, her knights are slain heroes. The fertile land is divided into manors, worked by a virtuous peasantry. Tirithor is the feudal ideal.

Dolithor

The heart of Tirithor is the legendary castle Dolithor, seat of the goddess and haven of her followers. It is said to be the fairest structure in two worlds, and the strongest, although Agrikans claim this distinction for Balgashang. Dolithor stands atop a hill from which the goddess may view the whole kingdom and marshal her forces for its defense.

Mendiz the Lion

Mendiz is the greatest of Larani's demi-divine servants, her chamberlain, and constable of Dolithor. He has the form of a great, crimson, winged lion. He bears a lance with a checkered pennant, and a shield (also checkered). When the goddess leaves her kingdom Mendiz governs in her stead. In battle, Mendiz is her Bannerbearer. Occasionally, the Winged Lion is dispatched to the mortal plane, most often in human guise.

Valamin: The Mouth of Virtue

Valamin is a little known member of Larani's household. He takes the form of a slim, young man in snow white robes, on the hem of which is a small bloodstain. He is sometimes called "the Frowner" since his face is always thoughtful. He smiles, it is said, only when given some special favor by the goddess. Some hold that Valamin is actually a son of Peoni, sent to Tirithor to remind Larani of, "that which might be forgotten". Legend has it that Valamin once slew a demon in defense of the fields of Valon, hence the stain on his garment. His mother thought it best that he dwell elsewhere. Valamin is a sad figure, too aggressive for Valon and too passive for Dolithor. Were it not for Valamin, Larani might more often assume the aspect of the Terrible Lady; he calms her when she becomes wrathful. Valamin bears messages between the two goddesses, but visits the mortal plane only rarely.

The Knights of Tirith

These are Larani's most often used servants. They are her royal guard, her special emissaries. The group is an Order comprised of demigods and former mortals. Their number is small, perhaps a few dozen, but is gradually increasing. The Knight-Commander of the Order is called Orthas. He was once a mortal knight, but was favored with elevation to demigod when he died defending a maiden against a demon of Agrik. This was the last act of a noble life. Orthas is called Larani's most faithful servant; he will obey her order without question.

CLERICAL ORDERS

In the Laranian church not all priests or temples are associated with a clerical order. Orders are often founded to represent a particular school of doctrinal thought, to accomplish a specific task, or to spread the word of Larani to outlying districts. In a few instances, orders have been created in response to a grant of land from a secular lord, who wished to demonstrate his piety by means of the bequest. Most orders sponsor their own fighting orders. The two Harnic orders are detailed below.

Order Of The Spear Of Shattered Sorrow

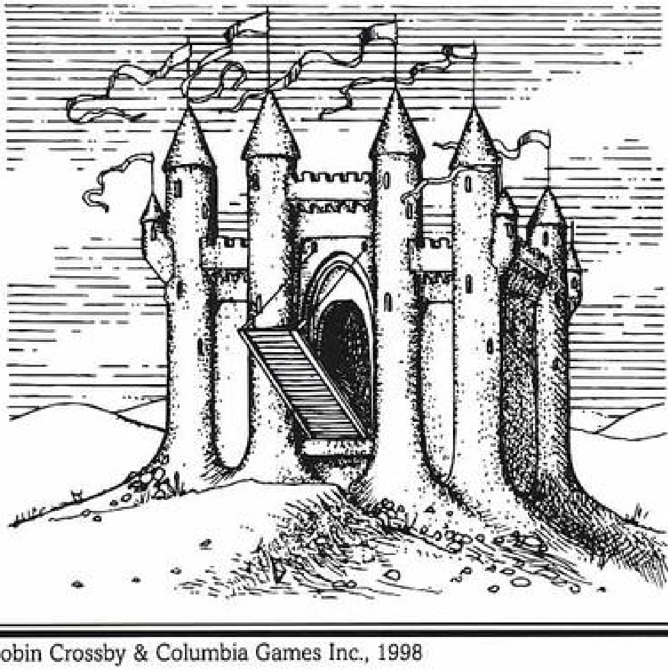
The oldest order of the church of Larani on Hârn has confined its activities to eastern Hârn since 622. The order's chief temple is in Thay; other major temples are in Cherafir and Tashal. The Order was founded on Hârn in 465 to provide missionaries to "spread the faith". The order was sponsored by King Erebir of Melderyn. The Grandmaster of the order and the primate of Hârn is Kerthede of Talvail, a virtuous woman whose major failing is her lack of confidence. The Order of the Spear of Shattered Sorrow sponsors the Order of the Lady of Paladins.

Order Of Hyvrik

The Order of Hyvrik was formally created in 593 when they were granted land in the city of Aleath. The order takes its name from Larani's legendary red and white checkered shield. The order quickly spread throughout southwestern Hârn. King Andasin I, the first ruler of Kanday, was a devout adherent of Larani and granted the order extensive lands. The Aleath temple is the headquarters of the order; other major temples are in Coranan and Shiran. The Order of Hyvrik sponsors the Order of the Checkered Shield, a powerful fighting order in western Hârn.

Turintesa (Clerical Grandmaster)

Each clerical order has a grandmaster whose role depends primarily on the purposes and activities of his order. Turintesa are more concerned with politics than spiritual matters, and interpret the directives or intent of the central authority. Appointments are generally made by the pontiff, although special dispensation has been given to a few orders to elect their own Grandmaster. Each Turintesa is assisted by one or more deputies.



Fighting Orders

Almost every clerical order maintains and commands its own fighting order. As is the case with clerical orders, fighting orders are often created to accomplish a specific task, such as protecting missionaries sent to an outlying district. Members serve as guards of Laranian and Peonian temples, and as warriors in the service of spiritual or secular lords. It is possible for a fighting order to be created without a sponsoring clerical order, although this is an extremely rare dispensation. As of 720 the only such order is the Company of the Holy Sepulcher which serves as the pontiff's guard at Tengela. Although they can trace their origin to the years before the creation of the pontificate, they were granted their charter by the pontiff Cerdan II in 542 TR.

Fighting orders are organized along the lines of feudal society, symbolizing the chivalric ideal so important to Laranian doctrine. Fighting orders maintain chapter houses as headquarters. Some hold huge estates, including mighty strongholds, and have hundreds of members. The chapter houses of the order also serve as a social club for members.

Corruption in the Church

In a few unfortunate cases rascally priests have amassed vast personal fortunes, led lives of semi-discreet debauchery, or endorsed a more aggressive doctrine than is proper. The official reaction to such behavior has usually been to turn a blind eye. It should be noted that this kind of clerical corruption is rare. Most Laranian priests do their best to live up to the ideals of their doctrine.

Clerical corruption causes some moral dilemmas within the church. The early concept of ecclesiastical infallibility has largely remained in the modern church. This sometimes leads to circuitous rationalization on the part of backsliding clergy seeking to justify or excuse their actions.

It is commonly held that the occasional corruption of her mortal priests causes Larani grief, and sometimes anger. Clerics punished by loss of office, excommunication, or other means, are deemed to have suffered the wrath of the goddess. Some believe that Larani will tolerate moderate venality "as long as the greater good is served"; a point of view that is favored particularly by those who have fallen to temptation. Another viewpoint contends that Agrik is the cause of corruption. "The fiery tempter spews vile words at the ear of mortal folly".

Theological debate in the Laranian church is divided over the fate of the souls of "errant" clergy; some believe that the deity eventually forgives them, allowing them to dwell in Tirithor, others hold that such souls are "cast beyond redemption" by an angry goddess.

ORGANIZATION

The backbone of the Laranian church is the temple, particularly the rural abbeys, most of which are self sufficient and hold large tracts of land. The church holds substantial estates and is the equal of many secular lords. Additionally, the church has always maintained well organized fighting orders and high ranking Laranian clerics often control the largest single armed force in a region.

Canon Law

The church of Larani settles internal disputes either by inquest and arbitration, trial by ordeal, or trial by combat. The method chosen depends on the alleged crime and the social status of the disputants. Generally, persons bound over for canon trial by secular authorities will face trial by ordeal, most often by dropping the accused into a tank of consecrated water. Those who sink are deemed to be innocent and are rescued.

Trial by combat may settle an issue of honor with a duel. Disputants may select champions or fight themselves to settle the issue legally on the battlefield. Duels are often fatal since the stakes are high; the loser may be dishonored or disinherited. But there are degrees of dishonor, and Laranians are (supposed to be) magnanimous in victory. In most cases, simply accepting the challenge is enough to redeem both parties' honor.

The interdict is perhaps the most devastating power that can be used by senior clergy. An interdict can be directed against a particular temple, order, bishopric, or primacy by the ranking priest responsible for that area. An interdict prohibits the performance of Laranian divine service and the administration of religious ritual. Although it is most often used as a last resort against extremely corrupt priests, more than one secular lord has been threatened with it, sometimes for less than "holy" reasons. In areas where the church of Larani is paramount, this is no casual matter and most interdicted lords compromise with the church.

CENTRAL AUTHORITY

The evolution of the church of Larani to its modern form, began with the creation of the pontificate at Tengela in 227 TR. The first pontiff, Saint Perelyne, and her two immediate successors organized the church to face the threat posed by the activities of the evil churches, particularly that of Agrik. Saint Janasyn, the second pontiff, issued the Guardian Decree, a writ that initiated the concept of the Laranian temple warrior. About three hundred years later, as feudal societies grew in power in western Lythia, this decree was amended to allow the creation of the church's fighting orders. Egenis, the third pontiff, created the Holy Office.

THE SEBRATH (The Pontiff)

The Abbot of Tengela, as the Laranian pontiff is also known, is a powerful lord in Trierzon as well as having immense spiritual influence. Since 717 the Sebrath has been Allyn of Kamalrith, a spiritual man of forty three, but also a masterful and intelligent politician. While he administers the church with great skill, he pays close heed to his spiritual duties. This is a welcome change from his predecessor, Lursyle of Perail, who did much to increase the wealth of the church at the expense of some compromises to the Laranian ideal. Under the poor example of her ten year rule, various excesses were allowed to grow.

Although Allyn has instituted a discreet program of reform, several problems remain unsolved, and in a few areas (most notably in Azeryan) there is resistance from clerics who have grown wealthy or dissolute. One of his concerns is the activities of the fighting order of the Lady of Paladins, who are conducting what amounts to a genocidal campaign against the Solori tribesmen of Hârn. Although he has sent several missives to the Hârnic Primate, Kerthede of Talvail, she lacks the confidence to put a stop to them.

What of the other gods?

Tell me the truth about...

Agrik enjoys pestilence, suffering, and wanton destruction, as do all vermin who pledge themselves to him. Where we are reluctant warriors, Agrikans delight in war and savagery. Only we can prevent them and their vile god of war from undoing the world.

Halea weakens our resolve and saps our strength. The pleasures of this world must not distract us from our sacred duties. We must be wary of the Whore of Heaven lest we be caught in her embrace when the battle is upon us.

Ilvir, the Craven Lord, is not to be trusted. His loyalty is for sale as shown by the bargain he wrought for the sundered claws of Agrik's hand. He honors the peace of the Concordat, and causes us harm, so long as he remains in Araka-Kalai with his foul creations. His followers are typically confused, lacking guiding principles, and should be kept at sword's length.

Morgath seeks to undo all that Larani is sworn to protect, and keeps Agrikans as friends and allies. We must struggle to unravel each new outrage between these twin gods of destruction. Bukrai has been Morgath's undoing, but we cannot allow his downfall to destoy us all.

Naveh employs shadow and deceit to unravel the feudal order. He poses as great a threat as Agrik, for the schemes of his followers often wreak their ill effects long before they are discovered. We must be vigilant lest court intrigue draws us to Naveh's ways.

Peoni is the mother Goddess and Larani has sworn to protect her from harm. Nor shall we allow her followers to endure injustice or suffering. It is for Larani's sake that we uphold the sacred feudal order. It is for Peoni's sake we defend the land from turmoil and strife.

Sarajin is poised as on the edge of a sword, between the pit of wanton destruction serving Agrik, and the sturdy rock of chivalry serving our Lady of Paladins. The Ljarl recalls the simple honor codes of the barbarians who dwell ignorant in the wild. We must help his followers overcome the last vestiges of their savage heritage and enlist Fakang to the service of Larani.

Save-Knor preserves the great Tome, securing the peace necessary for Kelestia to prosper under Larani's sacred order. Nevertheless, Save-K'nor's and his followers' obsession with knowledge often blinds them to the need for timely action. When the Dark Gods break the Concordat, he is liable to study the break rather than restore order.

Siem and many of his followers have retired to the Blessed Realm and left Larani to fend for herself against Agrik. Yet, due to his age and wisdom, Siem's choice is to be respected even if it is difficult to understand. The followers of Siem value peace and natural order, yet this sometimes leads them to rail against the flowering of civilization brought about by Larani.

THE TIRNATHA (The Body of the Unwilling)

This twenty member council serves as an advisory body to the pontiff and also make up the effective government of the church's estates. Members are appointed by the pontiff from the primates and archbishops. The name is derived from the tradition that, when the pontiff summons an individual to the office, they are required to formally refuse three times before taking office, symbolizing their desire to remain "simple" priests, uninvolved with the political intrigue of the pontifical court. There are usually at least two factions on the Tirnatha, and one of the pontiff's most difficult duties is preventing rancor from getting out of hand. The present pontiff has been aided by the deaths, of old age, of four members of the Body of the Unwilling since he took office. This has enabled him to appoint persons who are more in keeping with his program of reform.

When a pontiff dies the Tirnatha elects his successor. Election requires fifteen votes, a rule that occasionally results in long periods of negotiation before the necessary number of votes can be cast. They can choose any priest to fill the office, but most often choose either one of their own number, or a primate or archbishop.

The Laranian church has vested considerable power in its central and regional organizations. As a result the pontiff, primates, and archbishops have various powers that are designed to protect the church from internal heresies.

REGIONAL AUTHORITY

The Laranian church divides Lythia into primacies. Some primacies (Hârn and Ivinia for example) include several kingdoms. The wealth and power of the primacies depends on the legal status of the church, the number and value of estates held, the number and social rank of the adherents etc. Regions have considerable effective autonomy (particularly those far from Tengela) but usually heed the advice and instructions of the pontiff.

LIRRATH (Primate)

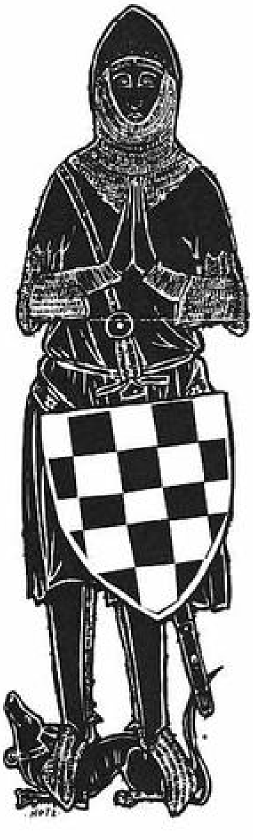
The primate is the administrative head of a primacy, and is responsible for the activities of the Laranian church therein. Lirraths are appointed by the pontiff after consultation with the archbishops of the primacy.

SEREKELA (Archbishop)

Serekelas are appointed by the pontiff, and are responsible for a sub-region of a primacy. They govern several temples and report to the primate. Most archbishops appoint the high priests and other senior temple officers in their districts, although some delegate that authority to their bishops.

REKELA (Bishop)

Rekelas can be appointed either by the pontiff or by an archbishop or primate. In the latter cases the appointment must be approved by the pontiff. Rekela are subordinate to archbishops and are in charge of a lesser division within the primacy. Bishops are primarily administrative officers of the church, although many become important secular lords because of the vast estates under their hand.



The Chivalric Code

Victory is secondary to Laranians. It is far more important to behave properly, to contest for the right reasons, and to do battle with honor. Those who follow Larani must be brave, compassionate and honorable.

Societal order is an ideal for the chivalric knight. He is the guardian of his culture. He is motivated by duty to his vassals and servants as well as to his lawful superiors and his clan. Laranianism works best in feudal societies, for these are, founded on obligation and privilege.

The code recognizes the possibility of conflicts of right against right. Hence, it is possible for followers of Larani to find themselves on opposite sides in a war. Their duty is to strive for victory in accordance with their feudal (or societal) obligations, but they are ever bound to fight "fairly". In battle, quarter may be offered and accepted with honor. If one's opponent is evil, quarter should be offered to him, but not accepted from him.

Tournaments are occasions for Laranian knights to champion a lady, organization or cause, and bring her/it honor by competing. Tournaments may consist of jousting between pairs of knights to determine the most proficient. The oldest tourneys are battles between (often large) teams/orders of knights.

The Ethelanca (The Holy Office)

The Ethelanca was created by the third pontiff in 268 TR, in an attempt to guard against corruption. It answers only to the Sebrath although the Tirnatha has some influence. The activities of the Holy Office have varied considerably over the last several centuries, largely depending on the motives of the pontiff. The Sebrath Lursyle, who died in 717, used the Ethelanca as a tool to destroy or weaken her opponents, often by trumping up charges of heresy.

At present the Holy Office is in a state of disorganization due to the ongoing reforms instigated by the present pontiff, who is attempting to purge some of his predecessor's appointees. It is speculated that Allyn intends to use the Ethelanca against some of the bishoprics of Azeryan, particularly those most resistant to his reforms. He is hoping to eliminate clerical corruption within the empire, which has produced some of the most venal clerics in the church.

The Holy Office has periodically undertaken inquisitions among the laity, most recently in eastern Trierzon between 616-620. Called the Tobran Inquisition, after the fanatical bishop who instigated it, the four year "rooting out of heresy" resulted in over one hundred executions for blasphemy, heresy, and witchcraft. This event did much to discredit the Ethelanca, to the extent where the Body of the Unwilling urged the pontiff to disband it. Although the Holy Office survived that crisis, since that time, its activities have been far more restrained.

TEMPLE HIERARCHY

SEROLAN (High Priest)

The High Priest is the master of the temple and makes policy in consultation with the other masters. The High Priest has three votes on the Council of Five (the High Priests and the other masters), guaranteeing that his will can only be defeated by a coalition of all four masters. A High Priest may split his votes to indicate partial approval of a position.

VALARAN (Master of Acolytes)

The master responsible for training of acolytes and assigning their labors. The Valaran decides when an acolyte has progressed sufficiently to be tested for elevation to the priesthood. More than anyone else, the Master of Acolytes, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the temple.

SULORAN (Master of Archives)

The Suloran is responsible for the temple library, holy relics, and bookkeeping, a very important role considering the wealth of many Laranian temples. The Suloran may head a large bureaucracy.

OBASARAN (Master of Secular Affairs)

The liaison with secular lords, particularly those from whom the temple holds its lands. In temples that hold considerable lands the Obasaran wields immense power. Since they are responsible for collecting revenue from temple estates, the potential for corruption is high, and many have yielded to temptation.

MENORAN (Master of the Fighting Order)

The Menoran is in charge of relations with the temple's fighting order. He leads ceremonies for them and acts as their spiritual advisor. His duties often require that he visit the chapter houses of the fighting order.

MATAKEA (Temple Priests)

The number of Matakea vary from temple to temple, depending on the wealth and self-sufficiency of the location. Matakea are assigned (by the High Priest) to various masters on a semi-permanent basis and assist them in the performance of their duties.

Matakea are not celibate, nor are they irreproachable ascetics. They are, required to display compassion, courage, and honor. A relatively recent practice involves assigning Matakea as the "chaplain" to noble families requesting (and able to afford) the service. Such priests usually reside with the family, counseling them on spiritual matters and leading their devotions.

ASHESA (Acolytes)

Acolytes usually enter the church between the ages of sixteen and twenty four, although it is not uncommon for older men, usually retired soldiers, to "hear the call" at a far later age. Many acolytes are the younger children of noble families who have little chance of an inheritance. Upon entry, acolytes take the "Hesa-Eran", the Three Vows to uphold the moral dictums of the church. During their training period (about two years) acolytes learn ritual and dogma, and assist their superiors. They perform much of the menial work in the temple; for most of them it is a novel and educational experience.

When judged ready by the Valaran, they are tested by the masters on doctrinal matters. If they pass, they undertake the "Telur-Vakum", a ritual labor. Each acolyte proposes a labor to the High Priest. Telur-Vakum can range from manuscript illustration to dangerous quests. Upon completion (which need not be successful) the acolyte is declared Matakea.

Teachings of the Valaran

Where did the world come from?

From nothing the First Gods created order and from order came life. Yet the First Gods forgot the lessons of order, and chaos overcame them. The lesser gods stepped forth to protect Kelestia. Larani brought them feudal order that they might rule justly, and live honorably and peacefully upon the bounty of the world. But some lesser gods were not peaceful, and unleashed forces of evil on Kethira. Larani has protected Peoni from these Dark Gods. Eventually, one of the Dark Gods will break the Concordat and strike. For that day we must be ready.

Your life is Larani's, but your character is your own. As a lord improves his fief, improve your character. Duties and obligations surround you. Fulfill them with honor and earn the praise of your peers. Fail them and be forgotten.

When you die Larani takes you to Tirithor where you serve as part of her army against the forces of darkness. Each time an adherent fails in this world, the armies of evil gain more ground in Tirithor. If you live an exemplary life she may take you as one of the Knights of Tirith. Those who fail her, but are still loyal in their heart, have honorable places in the common army, among the craftsmen or with the farm laborers, for Tirithor is the ideal feudal realm.

Laranian Funerals

Laranians see death as their long-awaited entry into Larani's feudal paradise of Dolithor. They abhor cremation if only because the method is preferred by Agrikans. The departed is dressed in fine white linen and buried in a family or temple vault or plot. Some Peonian graveyards have a section where Laranians are buried.

A tradition favored by Laranian fighting-orders is burial on a battlefield where a warrior has fought, or where the order has been victorious. Stone memorials are raised on fields of battle where such graveyards exist, These are a favorite target for Agrikan desecration and require constant repair, a common task given to penitent Laranians.

In ages past, Laranian knights were always buried with their personal armor and weapons, and sometimes their steed. The custom is now rare because it encourages grave-robbing.

BANNER OF MENDIZ II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RML Yards **Duration:** Instantaneous

Causes an immediate Morale Check for everyone within *Range*. Laranians get a +20 (MS); +50 (CS) bonus.

COURAGE OF MENDIZ II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) rounds

Increases subject's WIL by RSI/2 (MS) or by RSI (CS). Recalculate END (for *Duration* only).

CURSE OF THE RELUCTANT WARRIOR II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: RML feet **Duration:** RSI rounds

One chosen subject in *Range* suffers a –10 (MS) or –30 (CS) to combat skills for *Duration*. With CS, the effect is extended to three (3) subjects.

FAST OF THE TIRANNON II

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer/Meditation
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 2 (MS); 5 (CS) days

Subject is unaffected by hunger and thirst for *Duration* but has 50% EML for ALL skills. Invocation terminates if the subject eats/drinks. Invocation may not be performed on the same subject more than twice per month.

LARANI'S SHIELD II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) rounds

Subject's shield skill is +20 for *Duration*. An extra bonus of +10 applies if subject is protecting an unarmed lady within two hexes.

LIGHT OF DOLITHOR II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Increases or decreases (cleric choice) the light in a spherical zone (radius RSI hexes) centered on the cleric. RML is halved if the invocation is attempted outdoors. Those within the sphere suffer a –10 special penalty for one minute on all skills requiring sight. The cleric **is** affected by the change.

CF has the opposite effect to that intended.

PASSAGE TO TIRITHOR II

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** One infection roll

An invocation to help cure infection. Make an immediate roll on the Infection Table (Physician 3) with a +20 (MS) or +50 (CS) bonus to EML.

VALAMIN'S INSIGHT II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self **Duration:** One situation

Offers insight when the invoker is unsure of what to do. This applies only to moral quandaries. The GM may reveal the information in any suitable manner.

BANDAGE OF ST. PERELYNE III

Time: 15-RSI Seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** One Use.

MS: Stops bloodloss and heals one (1) injury level from any designated wound touched by the invoker.

CS: Heals the designated wound completely in one day.

CF: Causes the designated wound to become ***infected***.

BLESSING OF THE WINGED LION III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 5 (MS); 15 (CS) minutes

The subject is rendered immune to any damage from *ethereal* fire for *Duration*.

ENDURANCE OF ST. AMBRATHAS III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); (CS) 30 minutes

Increases subject's *Endurance* by RSI/2 (MS) or by RSI (CS).

HERALD OF THE END OF LIFE III

Time: 35-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch Sword **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) days

Gives a sword some of the attributes of Larani's holy sword *Avarkiel;* sword inflicts +3 IMP (+4 IMP vs. Agrikans) for *Duration*.

SHIELD OF HYVRIK III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 2 (MS); 5 (CS) rounds.

Provided the subject bears a checkered shield, the EML of a BLOCK defense increases by RSI x5 for *Duration*. That is, wth RSI of 8, the shield Block defense is +40.

CF causes the shield to shatter into several pieces.

LARANI 8

KNIGHT'S PEACE III

Time: 25-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RML yards **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Creates a spherical zone (radius RML yards) centered on the cleric within which all *Laranian* adherents are disinclined to fight. Those wishing to fight must roll vs 2x WIL.

OATHBINDER IV

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Touch Weapon **Duration:** Indefinite

Causes any sword to assume some of the attributes of Larani's sword *Avarkiel*. Bearer of the sword, provided he is a Laranian, will find his Sword EML is +10. A non-Laranian will find the sword unbalanced, drawing a penalty of –20 to Sword EML.

ORTHAS' FAITH IV

Time: 25-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) minutes

All adherents within Range receive a blessing. The effect is +10 (MS); +30 (CS) to all combat skills for *Duration*.

PROTECTION OF ANGCARADINA IV

Time: 25-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Enhances ALL armour or clothing worn by the cleric, or that of one subject touched. Affected armour takes on a blood-red hue. The effect is +2 (+3 Fire) to all protection values for *Duration*.

RED ROBES FLOWING IV

Time: 25-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) minutes

Causes all adherents in *Range* to go berserk. Warriors may roll vs 3x WIL to avoid berserking. Each warrior is assessed F3 Fatigue at the end of *Duration*.

VALAMIN'S SLEEP IV

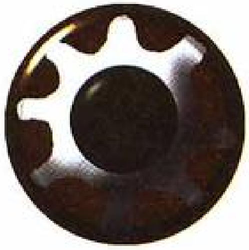
Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) hours

Recipient makes an immediate 5d6 shock roll. The invocation does not cause pain. The subject, if he fails, falls unconscious for *Duration*.

LARANI'S CHARGE V

Time: 25-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: RML yards **Duration:** Next Mounted Charge

All Laranians within *Range* have a +2 impact with a lance or spear for their next mounted charge.



Tormentor of the Unlamented Dead,
Master of the Principle of Evil,
Lord of the Gulmorvrin of the Black Pit,
Wielder of the Shadow of Incarnate Evil,
Master of Chaos,
The Lord of Darkness.

The Lord of Darkness

Morgath is the self-appointed master of chaos and evil. Of all the Gods, he is the the most prone to violence and insanity, and the quickest to anger. He is a lord of retribution, but cares nothing for justice. He is filled, it is said, with an abiding hatred of all things fair and noble. Morgath is best known as the master of the undead, particularly the *Gulmorvrin*, who are governed by his chief demigod *Klyss*. When Morgath appears to men, it is usually in some ethereal form, his true shape being unbearable to behold. He is never portrayed, but rather symbolized by the *Durangash*, a black circle (Bukrai) on a field of brown (Morgath).

Bukrai is a sphere of black nothingness, said to have been left behind by the First Gods. Why they left such an artifact is unknown. Some theologians have reasoned the sphere is a "black gate" to the plane where the essence of the First Gods dwell. Others say it is the gaol of a "Mad First God" imprisoned within for the good of Kelestia. Some have argued it contains a portion of the original chaos which cannot be released without destroying the All. Whatever, all agree the Lesser Gods were aware of Bukrai, never fully understanding its nature, nor daring to gaze within.

> *"Then came a time when Morgath, the bravest of the gods, was besieged within his stronghold by three rival gods and their armies, and he feared death. He did gather the last of his strength in a mighty attack to escape. Fleeing through shadow, he came to a lifeless world where Bukrai lay, siezed the orb, gazed within, and by its power, did utterly destroy his enemies."*

But Morgath too was lost. For by gazing within the Bukrai, he was forever changed. Siem, the wisest of the lesser gods, warned him, saying,

> *"Restore the dark orb and I shall grant thee forgetfulness, for he that seeks to be a master of souls, shall his own be forfeit, and he shall know no peace."*

But Morgath spurned the advice, and fled to Yashain to study Bukrai and learn its secrets. Siem said to the other gods,

> *"Now begins the end, for as he grows, so shall grow the shadow and all the strength of man and beast and god may not avail".*

The other gods made no attempt to recover Bukrai for Save-K'nor warned that the time was not right. Soon after, Siem isolated himself in the Blessed Realm, calling most of his folk to follow. Since then, Morgath may have gained some knowledge of the sphere's workings, but has grown ever more insane and is opposed by all gods.

Theological Mission

Morgath seeks to undo the work of all men and gods, believing that the natural state for Kelestia is the primal chaos that preceded the First Gods. The *Order of the Lord of Chaos* serves Morgath by seeking a return of the primal Chaos. They have two important missions: harvesting souls to be fed to Bukrai, and creating Gulmorvrin to serve Morgath in the final battle for supremacy.

Social Mission

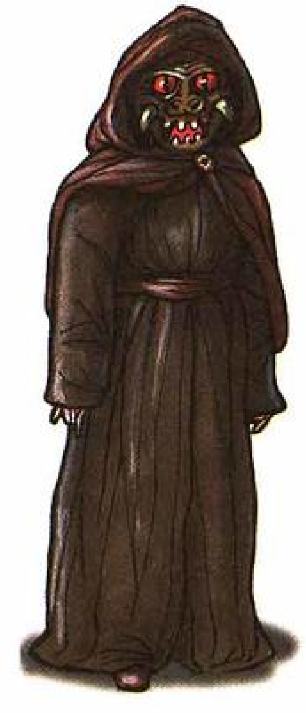
The church teaches that all other churches, and most political hierarchies, place one person above another and one state above another. The Church seeks the abolition of all established orders and a return to a world where each man is measured by his abilities, not his birth.

Geography

The worship of Morgath is uncommon, although where the church has any influence at all it tends to be considerable. The largest concentration of temples is in Azeryan. In many regions such as Trierzon, Melderyn, Kaldor, and Kanday, the practice is proscribed. On Hârn, worship is confined to the Thardic Republic and Rethem.

Symbols & Regalia

The number thirteen and the colors brown and black are particularly significant to the church of Morgath. The number results from the belief that the god has thirteen "true" names. Uttering any of the names aloud is deemed the greatest folly. The morbidity of the religion is reflected in the solemn black and/or brown robes of its priests, and the hideous masks they wear, partly to terrify, but mainly to hide identity.



A Khidarmur (High Priest) dressed in preparation for the Tenth Degree of Nyardath (High Ritual Ceremony). He wears the Hyadak mask to terrify the sacrificial victim and to hide his identity. All Morgathian priests wear similar masks although each will be unique. Masks are constructed either of carved wood or stiff, painted leather. They are usually made by the priest himself. In areas where the church is legal, it is not unusual for clerics to wear their masks in public.

MORGATH 2

THE EARLY CHURCH

Around 250 BT, a man named Lekethan and his followers founded a temple in the mountains of Azeryan after emerging from a tomb complex called Urbrath. The men never spoke publically of their underworld experiences. Adherents were recruited with great care, and temples were established close to the seats of secular power.

Morgathianism has never sought to be a religion for the masses. The early church preached that "all are doomed to eternal torment in the afterlife", but there were degrees of torment that could be lessened by faithful service to Morgath before death. By the first century TR, this doctrine had been made more palatable by promoting a hedonistic mortal life for those who served well. This doctrine served well enough for a few more centuries but could never flourish given the appeal of other religions. By the sixth century TR, the early doctrine lost much of its conviction and faced internal dissent from several heresies.

The Balshan Heresy

The most successful and dramatic heresy took place on Hârn. The prophet Balsha argued that the misery of the afterlife could be eased by exchanging the immortal soul for "half life eternal." This concept was later refined as the "little death," the "thirteen lives," or "undeath".

Balsha's martyrdom in 558 fostered a jihad that destroyed the Corani Empire and led to the founding of the Theocracy of Tekhos in 568. This dictatorship was abhorrent to the orthodox Morgathian church. The Lythian church worked behind the scenes to bring about its downfall, which was more or less achieved by 588.

The Council of Murshel

The lesson of the Balshan Jihad was not ignored. The Council of Murshel convened between 591 and 596 and produced a revised theology called the Thirteen Articles. The Articles combined old dogma with a number of heretical ideas including Balshanism. A major theme was obedience to the central authority. The reforms widened philosophical appeal and were better able to deal with the existence of the other gods.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Violence and human sacrifice play integral roles in the worship of Morgath. Due to the authoritarian nature of the church, Morgathian rituals vary little from temple to temple. Indeed, changes in orthodox doctrine and ritual are brutally discouraged.

The Shadryn-Vars

This is the low ritual of the Morgathian church. Masses are held on the 26th of each month, the day when the night sky enters its darkest quarter of the new moon. The masses consist of lengthy, canted prayer and some form of blood sacrifice. Human sacrifice is preferred, typically the ritual execution of some unfortunate captive, or sometimes that of a disagreeable Morgathian cleric. If a human is unavailable, an animal is substituted. The primary purpose of the Shadryn-Vars is to instill the laity with an appropriate sense of awe and terror.

It is unusual for Morgathian laity to be granted private audience with a priest. Adherents may approach the altar and pray for "wrath to smite their banes". Before praying, supplicants place some offering on the altar, money being most usual, although anything of value is considered appropriate. The Khala-Zhada hears their prayers and after the congregation is dismissed, decides on appropriate action. Since the most common prayers involve difficulties that can be solved by direct physical action (on business competitors, neighbors, enemies, etc.) he will assign acolytes to "answer the prayer". How effectively the prayer is answered depends on the size and value of the original offering. A major "miracle" might result in the opponent becoming the sacrifice at the next mass. Lesser "miracles" are typically beatings or destruction of property. Supplicants who have had their prayers answered are expected to "testify to the power of Bukrai" at the next mass.

Teachings of the Khidarmur

The Creed

The most common Morgathian prayer

I believe in my strong self, for nothing is stronger than Bukrai, which tears all things down, and I am of Bukrai.

I believe in my intelligent self, for none are as intelligent as those who perceive the truth of Bukrai, and I am of Bukrai.

I believe in my invincible self, for nothing can overcome death except through Bukrai, and I am of Bukrai.

I believe in my perfect self. I believe in Klyss, who will guide me to my perfect self. I believe in Myrvria, with whom I will shed my imperfect self. I believe in Morgath, the perfect one, who will use my perfect self to return Kelestia to perfection.

Burial Customs

Morgathians abhor cremation. Their practice is to leave the body as intact as possible and they are probably the most sophisticated tomb-builders on Lythia. At Meokolis, for example, they have constructed and still maintain and expand a huge necropolis. Elsewhere, most Morgathian temples have extensive catacombs that contain resting places for the undead.

Morgathian tombs canot be too elaborate in places where the religion is proscribed, which includes most of Hârn. However, a few crypt complexes dating from the Theocracy of Tekhos and earlier have survived, among them a large necropolis near Golotha where the church still exercises great power.

Ormauk (The Secret Tongue)

The Morgathian church has developed a private language called *Ormauk*. This language is taught only to clerics, and the penalty for teaching it to outsiders is death to both the teacher and the student(s). Ormauk's origin is unknown, although it was supposedly granted by the deity. It is more likely a human invention, created by early priests to guard their secrets.

The Kenat-Retsa

The Kenat-Retsa is a passage ritual intended to implant the dogma of the church into new members of its congregation. Although the ritual can be taken at any age, it is traditionally taken at age 13.

An initiate trains for the Kenat-Retsa for thirteen days. During this time they are taught ritual prayer and dogma, usually by an acolyte, although a substantial donation often improves the rank or skill of the tutor. The initiate is also tested each day on basic doctrine. Failure results in a beating, or worse. Initiates who trifle with their tutors have been known to disappear, summoned, it is said, by the Master of Chaos.

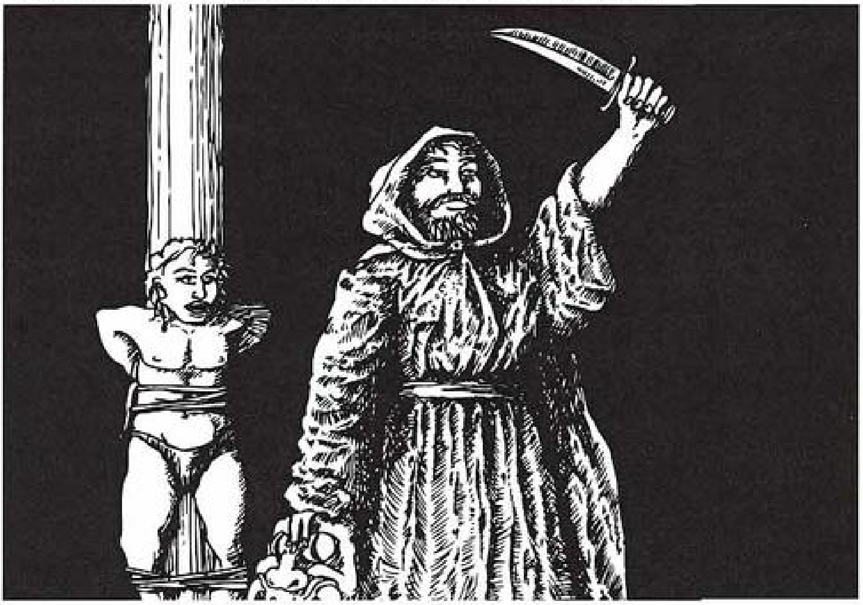
After their training period initiates undergoe the Kenat-Retsa at the beginning of the next mass. This is a short ceremony during which they prostrate themselves before the altar and answer thirteen ritual questions by the officiating priest. Finally, they place a personally carved wooden mask inscribed with their name upon the altar, symbolizing their devotion to Morgath. This done, they are considered "the Wreaker's Flesh" (the phrase commonly used to describe lay worshippers of Morgath) and join the congregation to participate in the service.

The Degrees of Nyardath

These are the thirteen ritual ceremonies to which attendance and performance are restricted to the priesthood. Each ritual, or "degree", is more difficult and complex than the last, and priests learn them according to their mastery of ritual. The first twelve degrees are divided into four groups of three, called, from lesser to greater complexity, the Shadath, Huldath, Amaldath, and Varedath. The thirteenth ritual is called Ukrandath and can be performed only by a cleric of the VII Circle.

Some of the thirteen degrees involve summoning undead, or in the higher degrees, some more malevolent incarnation. This is not without its dangers. Summoning and controlling even small elements of the Shadow is difficult and exhausting, and "accidents" have been known to happen.

Human sacrifice is common to all thirteen degrees. The means vary from relatively merciful throat cuttings, to sinister ceremonies involving the unholy minions of Morgath. In the highest degrees, the sacrifices are unrivaled for their unpleasantness. Human sacrifice is believed to attract the deity's attention and to "feed the Shadow". Morgathian priests have evolved elaborate rituals designed to sap the will of the sacrifice by reducing them to extremes of terror. In many cases the intent is simply to satisfy the priests' sadism. In most ceremonies the sacrifice is preceded by the officiating priest removing his mask, to stand "naked before Bukrai".



What of the other gods?

Tell me the truth about...

Agrik's followers are closest to the aims of the Master of Chaos but they are blinded by their hatred of Larani and have lost sight of the true goal. They can be useful, but they are dangerous and full of rage. Be wary.

Halea is selfish and greedy. She seeks only her own pleasure. Her followers waste their time seeking pleasures in this world, unheeding of the joys of serving the Befouler, unheeding of the transitory nature of this world, and the conflict in the next.

Ilvir sits in his tower plotting endlessly. He is one of the most hated of the Lesser Gods. He creates life, modeled on his own twisted thoughts. Every creature he spawns adds more order where once Chaos ruled supreme. But Ilvir is craven and his cowardice will be his downfall. The Wreaker will undo his unnatural works and the Chaos will return.

Larani is the most dangerous of all other gods, and her followers would see us destroyed. They subvert the advance of Chaos at every turn. She represents all that is accursed in order and unnatural law. She is strong and we must be cautious. The Wielder of Shadow knows that when the time is right, not even the Lady of Paladins will be able to stand against him.

Naveh styles himself the Master of Death. Perhaps he is jealous of the Wielder's command of Bukrai, the Shadow darker and mightier than he. His assassins are misguided, but they are easily manipulated, and useful at times.

Peoni is the weak sister to Larani. She preaches that all things happen in cycles. Birth, life, death. Planting, growing, harvesting. Who is she to impose such order on the Chaos? She is insidious because she speaks to the common man, wooing him with gifts of food and child. She must be stopped at every turn.

Sarajin and his kin are doomed to pointless strife in the afterlife, and seek to impose order on this strife. What folly. The Ljarlic Code is an affront. They are proud and must be taught their place. Their love for battle makes them dangerous in open conflict, although their Ljarl makes them predictable foes. This love of honor is their weakness, as order is always weakness.

Save-K'nor is the most ignorant of the Lesser Gods. For all his learning, he knows naught of the power of Bukrai. Still, his rules are useful as they limit the other gods, hindering them while giving the Wreaker time to plot. Save K'nor is a necessary evil who will one day be handled harshly.

Siem, although jealous of Bukrai's power, could not summon the courage to wrest the Orb from our lord's grasp and retreated to his "Blessed Realm". He is a coward, and like all cowards, not to be trusted. His children are among our most dangerous foes.

ORGANIZATION

The church of Morgath has always mercilessly crushed dissent and has generally been able to maintain the image of unity. The Order of the Lord of Chaos is the only clerical order; all priests belong to it and it may be considered synonymous with the church. Renegades are destroyed when discovered.

CENTRAL AUTHORITY

The central authority of the Order of the Lord of Chaos is centered in an extensive necropolis just outside the great city of Meokolis in the Azeryan Empire. It is a large structure although only a portion of it is above ground.

VYNKHADUR (Pontiff)

The seat of the supreme mortal servant of Morgath is in Meokolis. The pontiff commands a large and rigid bureaucracy through which he communicates with the regional primates.

NAMANA-KHIDUR (Jury of the Dark Orb)

An advisory council of twelve anonymous clerics, sometimes called the "nameless ones" but more often the "Jury of the Dark Orb". They reside at Meokolis, elect and advise the pontiff, and ensure the Torken-Matan (below) is never idle.

GURIM (Primate)

The Morgathian church has divided western Lythia into thirteen primacies. A Gurim answers directly to the pontiff. The primate resides within one of his primacy's temples. The primacies usually correspond to secular, national boundaries, but there are exceptions. Hârn, for example, is a single primacy while Azeryan contains several.

TORKENA-MATAN (The Holy Office)

The Morgathian pontificate ensures its control of the temples and clerics throughout western Lythia by means of this sinister organization. Created in 596, following the Balshan Heresy, the Holy Office was charged with the exposure and punishment of heresy among the priesthood. Its original purpose was to prevent a successful recurrence of heretical dissidence and to protect and maintain the authority of the central church.

The Torkena-Matan is kept mysterious, even to high-ranking clergy. It answers only to the Jury of the Dark Orb and the pontiff. It has considerable autonomy, and often conducts independent investigations. Not even primates are immune to the attentions of the Holy Office.

Hidden agents of the Torkena-Matan pervade the temples. Most temples have at least one such agent, and many have two or more, none of whom are known to each other. The knowledge that even the most innocuous comment may be twisted and reported does much to keep dissidents in check. Agents report "impious" or "heretical" behavior to the Uzhada, the Holy Office's dreaded inquisitors. The arrival of one of these men, all high ranking priests, is often enough to cause panic stricken flight or suicide among the "guilty". Their appearance is designed to intensify the terror of their reputation. They dress in black, including gloves and a featureless cloth mask that leaves only the eyes exposed. Their primary symbol of office is the Adazh, a silver rod carved with skulls.

The inquiries of the Uzhada are either by means of ordeal or by lengthy interrogation. The burden of proof of innocence is placed upon the accused. Judgments of the Uzhada are unappealable. It is common for the Uzhada to promise mercy if the accused names other conspirators. Many do, even naming innocents. Those who cooperate are usually offered the mercy of free undeath.

The Thirteen Articles

The Articles were proclaimed in 598. Reforms included acceptance of the principle of Thirteen Amorvrin Incarnations. The hopeless despair of the early church was replaced with positive stress on immortality through undeath and the rewards of power in life, the former to be provided by the deity and the latter by the church. The principle of damnation in the afterlife was quietly abandoned.

1. The growth of the Order has resulted in confusion among the Faithful. It has become essential to clarify doctrine. Henceforth, all communication to the Khala and their inferiors shall include these articles of Faith in Our Lord Morgath.
2. The imperial and feudal systems impose order on the Faithful. They must be destroyed.
3. The churches of other gods would impose order on the Faithful. They must be destroyed.
4. It is necessary that the Order of the Lord of Chaos be disciplined in our work. This normally abhorrent order is justified by the limitations of this damaged world and by the Tormentor's oversight of all that we do. It is our Dark Lord's will that we fight the enemy with weapons of his own devising.
5. The Order shall work diligently to create effective centralized armies of Gulmorvrin to be used to effect the articles at such time as the Order declares.
6. The Order recognizes the inevitability of the ultimate conflict, the time of which will be made known to the Vynkhadur.
7. The Order shall work to ensure the welfare of its members by weakening or destroying those who oppose them.
8. The Order recognizes the value of its living members, therefore they shall be guaranteed continued existence as immortal Amorvrin upon reaching the rank of Khidarmur.
9. The Order recognizes the value of its Amorvrin members, and its value to them. Therefore, let those Amorvrin who stay bound to the Order be guaranteed thirteen Incarnations, no more and no less.
10. The Order recognizes the threat posed by renegade Amorvrin. Therefore they shall not be admitted to any rank within the church. They must be destroyed.
11. The Order recognizes the value of divine numerology, therefore let the number thirteen and its multiples be considered Holy Numbers, to be used in all liturgies.
12. The Order recognizes the value of divine symbolism, therefore let the Durangash and the colors black and brown be considered Holy, to be used in all liturgies.
13. The Order recognizes that Divine Retribution is the natural foe of Heresy and demands that all heretics be made Gulmorvrin in service to the Lord.

TEMPLE HIERARCHY

The basic organizational unit of the church of Morgath is the temple. Ideally this includes thirteen (usually living) priests and a variable number of acolytes. The temple usually has a building in which the priests live and hold services. In areas where the church is illegal, the "temple" may consist of a band of wandering clerics.

Paradoxically, the Order of the Lord of Chaos insists upon an extraordinarily rigid hierarchy for the church. It is important to remember that a church is not a god, and the church's interpretation of the god's wishes often reflect the wishes of the hierarchy rather than the perceived wishes of the god.

Khidarmur (High Priest)

The master of the temple is theoretically expert in all matters of dogma and practice, leads important ceremonies and makes temple policy. The Primate typically promotes a local priest to this rank, but an outsider may be installed.

Khala (Priests)

Most temples have twelve Khalas, each appointed by the High Priest. Each Khala specializes in one aspect of the temple's daily operation. The *Khala Council* they form to advise the Khidarmur is always a nest of intrigue. The Primate usually requests the advice of the council before appointing a successor.

Because of the isolated nature of Morgathian temples, the offices are not necessarily consistent between temples. In some areas, certain positions will be non-existent, or have different names. The most common positions and their descriptions, as well as the title's nearest Hârnic translation from Ormauk, are given in the sidebar.

Sungai (Acolytes)

For the first two years of training, acolytes are called *Longai*. They are much abused and forced to do all menial tasks, including the unpleasant "cleaning-up" after a sacrifice or two. After passing some rigorous tests, and achieving some mastery of the low rituals, the Longai are promoted to Sungai. They serve as messengers, lieutenants for the Khalas, and undertake various other duties at the command of their superiors. Sungai are given the freedom to journey outside the temple, performing work for the church on their own initiative. The nature of the work is varied, but seldom pleasant for bystanders.

The Khala Council

Khala-Agash: the Guardian of Treasures is a highly coveted office. The temple's coffers and spending powers are his personal domain.

Khala-Bukrin: the Master of Archives, responsible for the temple library. All temples have significant libraries, and most have a few tomes of great age and mystery. The Bukrin is also keeper of all temple relics. Access to the library is jealously guarded and the penalty for unauthorized possession of a temple relic is death (or undeath).

Khala-Gekesa: the master responsible for the funds, operations, and doctrinal loyalties of lands held by the temple, and relations with secular authorities. Since the long term goal of the church is to overthrow all governments, only the most political of priests can thrive in this office.

Khala-Longai: the master who oversees the training of the junior acolytes in the craft skills they need.

Khala-Kenat-Retsa: the master who presides at Kenat-Retsa rituals, in which worshippers are initiated into the church.

Khala-Khida: the master who oversees the temple's day-to-day operations, including cooking, cleaning, and provisioning the kitchens. He is aided by the Sungai, most of whom spend the better part of their first year doing menial domestic chores. The Khida has significant influence on whether a particular acolyte will advance or be held back.

Khala-Morvrin: the master responsible for the temple crypt, often called Guardian of the Unlamented Dead, He is also charged with summoning and controlling Amorvrin and Gulmorvrin for temple rites.

Khala-Naman: The Master of Judgement, who presides over internal temple courts and administers Morgathian Canon Law. When the Khala Council passes sentence on an offender, the Naman decides the offender's fate.

Khala-Nyardath: the Master of Ritual who presides over the ceremonies of the degrees of Nyardath, held on the 13th of each month. He defers to the Khidarmur (high priest) for some ceremonies.

Khala-Shadryn-Vars: the Master of Low Ritual who presides over all ceremonies held for the laity.

Khala-Sungai: the master who oversees the training of senior acolytes in rituals and ceremonies. Most exploit the great power they wield over the acolytes for personal gain and pleasure. Khala-Sungai are never lacking in eyes and ears.

Khala-Zhada: the Master of Discipline, responsible for temple security. The Zhada sends out the leg-breakers, and runs a network of spies and informants inside and outside the temple. Holders of this office are well placed to receive the next available promotion to High Priest.

THE SHADOW OF BUKRAI

The Shadow of Bukrai, also known as the *Breath of Klyss,* is a horrific ethereal phenomenon which surrounds some artifacts sacred to Morgath, and his undead minions. Most Morgathians believe the malign energy of the Shadow emanates from Bukrai itself. The Shadow is the basis of existence for the Amorvrin and Gulmorvrin.

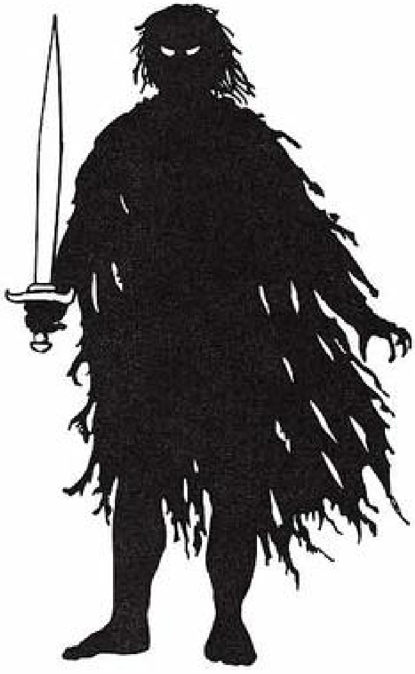
The Shadow of Bukrai is the deadliest of foes to mortals. There are many dangers and foul creatures to destroy the flesh, but nothing else in all Kelestia has the power to destroy immortal souls. Worse, if a person is sacrificed by Morgathian cultists, the destruction of the eternal soul in the primal chaos of Bukrai is merciful. More often the soul is fed to Bukrai, while the body lingers as an undead Gulmorvrus.

The Amorvrin (free undead)

Those who voluntarily join the ranks of Morgath's undead are the Amorvrin. They have exchanged their AUR for the Shadow of Bukrai, either by the ritual invocation *Myvria's Kiss* or by embracing the Shadow at the moment of death. The Amorvrin's departed AUR, is replaced by the Shadow of Bukrai (SHA). They retain their INT and WIL and whatever knowledge they had in life, including spells. Amorvrin have a Bukrai shadow that may extend outside their physical body. Amorvrin who were Morgathian clergy in life may continue to serve as clerics. If a Amorvrus serves Klyss well, he may receive a "Bukrai Blade", which enhances the Shadow of its wielder. Amorvrin need a consecrated resting place (crypts are ideal). When an Amorvrus is killed it reforms at its resting place in no less than 13 hours and no more than 13 months. Amorvrin's wounds are healed when they reform, unless caused by consecrated holy weapons.

The Gulmorvrin (unfree undead)

The Gulmorvrin are the best known and most feared of the undead. They have lost their AUR, INT, and WIL, and exist only to serve Klyss, the principal servant of Morgath. Their Shadow does not extend beyond their bodies, but being slain by a Gulmorvrus in close combat has the same effect as being killed within the Shadow. When a Gulmorvrus is defeated in battle, its body crumbles. It can never reform and Morgath already has the soul. Gulmorvrin are sensitive to AUR and attack the highest AUR present.



To most, the distinction between Amorvrin and Gulmorvrin is slight or unknown. The church deliberately confuses the issue to outsiders.

Bukrai Points (BPs)

Bukrai Points are similar to Piety Points. A Bukrai Point is a unit of soul material. When Amorvrin (not Gulmorvrin) sacrifice souls to Morgath, they receive Bukrai Points equal to the AUR of the soul sacrificed. Amorvrin must use the *Sacrifice* ritual invocation at least once per month, to provide 13 Bukrai Points to Klyss. More than one sacrifice may be required. Gulmorvrin earn Bukrai Points for their Amorvrin master (if any). Failure to "pay the debt" results in an automatic change to Gulmorvrin. Amorvrin and Gulmorvrin can accumulate BPs and the GM should keep an accurate tally.

Klyss The Necromancer

The greatest of Morgath's demonic servants is Klyss the Necromancer, Lord of the Gulmorvrin, Befouler of the Dead. Klyss often walks among mortal men in the form of an emaciated man in black robes. His face is unnaturally pale, but rarely seen past the cowl that keeps it ever in shadow. His hands are withered, almost skeletal.

It is said that meeting the eyes of Klyss directly, or feeling his touch, destroys the will of mortals and results in "the fate which no flight escapes." A legend regarding Klyss involves a servant who encountered the Necromancer in a marketplace. Telling his master that Klyss had made a threatening gesture at him, the servant begged the loan of a horse and fled for a distant town. The master, curiosity overcoming trepidation, went to the market to see the truth of his servant's story. Seeing the figure of the demonic lord, he summoned his courage and asked Klyss why he had threatened his servant. The apocryphal reply was: "I threatened him not. My gesture was surprise at seeing him, for tonight I am to meet him in a far off place."

When he is not incognito, Klyss carries Udra, a staff of bone carved with thirteen skulls and thirteen orbs. Udra also bears, in ancient runes, Klyss' oath of fealty to the Dark One. The staff's powers and purposes are obscure.

Myrvria The Temptress

The lieutenant of Klyss, Myrvria recruits souls to the ranks of the undead. She bargains with mortals, offering "eternal life" or "the heart's desire" to those who will speak the Unholy Oath:

> *"To own myne form, when breath*
> *hath fled, shall I gift myne soul."*

When someone utters this line thirteen times at the conclusion of an appropriate ceremony, he has sealed a pact with Morgath.

Encounters with the Shadow

Amorvrin may have a shadow extending beyond their bodies. Entering the Shadow or touching a Morvrus, initiates a Mental Conflict (SKILLS 24) with the Shadow (Mental Conflict Ml equals MFS x10, maximum 95.

The Shadow is distinctly darker and cooler than its surroundings. It breeds inexplicable fear, and a faint odor of the crypt. The *Shadow* is indiscriminate; even the cleric who creates one is affected. There are three possible results of a Mental Conflict within the Shadow of Bukrai:

[1] Mortal is victorious and safe even within the Shadow for WIL minutes.

[2] Mortal and shadow wielder have equal success (a draw). Another conflict is initiated. The Shadow doed not accumulate Fatigue.

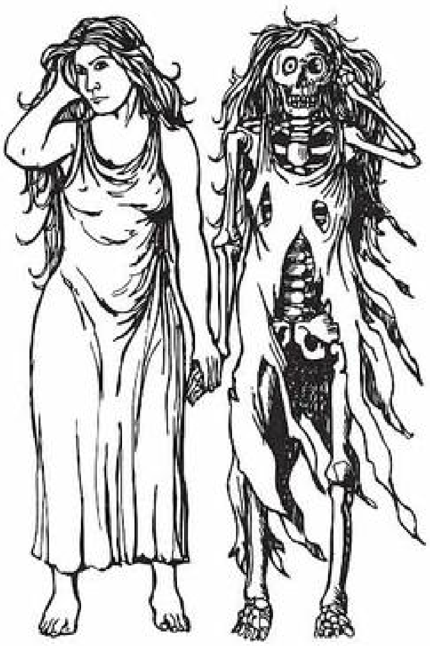
[3] Shadow is victorious and gains possession of the mortal body. The Shadow enters the mind and offers a grim choice:

- Accept the Shadow and become an Amorvrus. This means the character's soul is sent to Morgath and is fed to Bukrai. The Aura is replaced by an equal amount of Bukrai Points and the character now joins the undead as an Amorvrus.
- Refuse the Shadow and become a Gulmorvrus.

Characters always have the option to appeal to their Deity for mercy by calling for *Divine Intervention.*

Killing Amorvrin and Gulmorvrin

Morvrin do not suffer injuries the same way mortal creatures do. They are immune to shock rolls caused by physical trauma. Morvrin do not accrue Fatigue (no Universal Penalty). Morvrin are killed only when Total Injury Levels exceed END. Slain Amorvrin disintegrate rapidly and reform in their resting place. Amorvrin's wounds are fully healed when they reform, unless caused by enchanted or consecrated weapons. The only way to truly destroy Amorvrin is to kill them while their resting place has been destroyed (consecrated to another Deity).



MORVRIN FIELD STRENGTH

Morvrin Field Strength ranges from 1 to 12. It measures the strength of the Shadow and also determines the radius, in feet, of the circular shadow emanating from the Morvrin. The EML of a Shadow for Mental Conflict is MFS x10.

Amorvrin Field Strengths tend to increase with reincarnation. Amorvrin who possess a Bukrai Blade have a higher Field Strength.

AMORVRIN SHADOW TABLE

Life	**Personal MFS**	**Bukrai Blade**	
		Chance	MFS
1-3	1d2	10%	+1d2
4-7	1d3	25%	+1d3
8-10	1d4	40%	+1d4
9-12	1d5	55%	+1d5
13+	1d6	70%	+1d6

Bukrai Blades

Bukrai Blades are said to originate in the depths of Durakhar from the hands of Klyss himself. Most Bukrai Blades exude fairly weak Shadows. The intent of these artifacts is to enhance the field strength of the individuals using them. Hence, a character whose own FS is three, wielding a Bukrai Blade of FS two, would have a cumulative FS of five.

Other Shadow-of-Bukrai-emanating artifacts, such as rings, staves, armour, etc. exist, but they are (mercifully) rare. Persons who use Bukrai artifacts have to test their effects quite often. Inevitably, such persons succumb to the Shadow.

MORGATH 8

SPEAK WITH DEAD II

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins

Allows conversation with a captured soul for *Duration*.

Soul may initiate Mental Conflict (SKILLS 23).

HEART OF DARKNESS II

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** n/a

Invoker draws a small portion of the Shadow of Bukrai into his person and stores it in his skull as Bukrai Points. If the amount exceeds subject's AUR, he becomes a Gulmorvrus. The number of Bukrai Points is 1d6 (MS) or 2d6 (CS).

NECROSY II

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer & Chant
Range: Touch corpse **Duration:** 3 (MS); 9 (CS) days

Permits the invoker to preserve a corpse at its *current* state of decomposition for *Duration*. **CF** will turn the corpse into a pile of dust.

CLOAK OF KLYSS III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** RSI hours

Permits the subject to detect a Shadow of Bukrai and enter it with no penalty or risk for *Duration*. Inside the Shadow, the invoker's body is semi-translucent and his bones are faintly visible where not obscured by clothing. The ritual is used to protect living clergy from the Shadow during ceremonies attended by Amorvrin, etc.

EYES OF KLYSS III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RML feet **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins

Permits the invoker to conjure a black orb about twelve inches in diameter, which hovers where created for *Duration*. Invoker may order the sphere to move anywhere within *Range*. The orb contains a pair or glowing red eyes which grant the invoker a telepathic vision of what the eyes can see. Eyes of Klyss can see in the dark at 100% vision, at 50% in torchlight or at dusk, but are blind in daylight. The orb disappears with impact from a blunt weapon or by invokers choice.

KLYSS' COMMAND III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RML Feet **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) hours

Permits the priest to command one Gulmorvrus within *Range* for *Duration*.

MS: The cleric must use verbal commands to direct the Gulmorvrus.

CS: The cleric has telepathic control and needs only to think of a command.

CF: Gulmorvrus engages and attacks the nearest person, who might be the invoking cleric.

THROAT OF KLYSS III

Time: 25-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RML feet **Duration:** 3 (MS); 5 (CS) minutes

Those within *Range* hear the scream of a person losing their soul to Morgath. Anyone within RML feet must roll vs WIL x5 (MS) or WIL x2 (CS). Failure causes the victim to faint for *Duration* or flee (GM Discretion). CF requires the cleric to make a 4d6 shock roll.

MYVRIA'S KISS IV

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch victim **Duration:** n/a

Myvria's offer to become an Amorvrin. This ritual is taught only to Morgathian priests who reach the rank of Khidarmur.

RESTING PLACE IV

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Touch area **Duration:** Indefinite

Consecrates a new *Resting Place* for a morvrus. This requires a special expenditure of Piety (or Bukrai Points) equal to the cubic feet of the Resting Place. CF causes the invoker to enter a mindless trance for 1d6 hours.

SACRIFICE V

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch corpse **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) Mins

Gets the attention of Klyss. The AUR of sacrificed individuals are intercepted by Klyss. The invoker is rewarded with an equivalent number of BPs. Living invokers receive Piety Points.

Lord of the Pitch Shadows,
Master of Deceit and Evil Dreams,
Lord of the Last Illusion,
The Unseen Lifter of Lives,
Trancer the Cat,
Wealth's Worry,
The Merchant of Death.

Naveh is the most merciless of all the gods. Although some claim that distinction for Morgath, Naveh is motivated by cold and remorseless intelligence rather than by violent insanity. He is the god of darkness, and is often worshipped by thieves and assassins.

Naveh is known as the bringer of nightmares, and is associated with untimely and inexplicable death. He is sometimes called the Thief of Heaven, and is deemed a doer of the impossible and a master of lies and deception.

Theological Mission

The Church of Naveh exists to provide followers the necessary discipline to carry out the Master's orders when the Chaos returns.

Social Mission

The Church works quietly to destabilize other established churches and governments to forcing them to prepare for the Chaos.

Lay Adherents

The Navehan church has no true laity. It holds no lay services and has no socially significant sacraments to mark rites of passage such as birth, marriage, or death. There are many who pay respect to Naveh privately. Those who are respected in their community are often members of another church, praying to the Master of Deceit for their own private reasons.

Typical Clergy

Navehans are typically control-oriented and distrustful of others. Friendship and love are considered dangerous luxuries and are forsaken. Most Navehan clerics were kidnapped shortly after birth and raised in a temple.

Navehans believe that the dissolution of the Concordat (which many believe to be imminent) will result in the destruction of all who lack the discipline to obey His command.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Naveh has been worshipped in some form for millennia. Early worship may have evolved from man's fear of death. The origins of the early church are hard to separate from the legend and myth that surround the history.

HARSA-NAVLA (The Place Most Holy)

The traditional history of the Navehan church is based on writings called the "Revelations of Sinan-Khu-Hazar", which are derived from the preachings of a prophet who was active in eastern Lythia during the eighth century BT. Sinan spoke of "divine discipline" and claimed that he had been granted his revelations after a series of oracular dreams led him to seek a citadel "in the shadows of illusion". This edifice was Harsa-Navla, the Place Most Holy. Navehan history is extremely vague regarding Harsa-Navla, perhaps because the Revelations were written at least a century after Sinan's death.

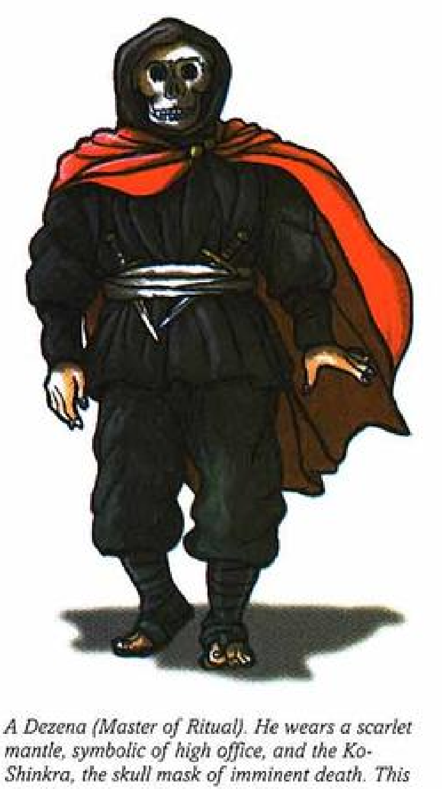
Geography

Temples of Naveh are located throughout Lythia, but worship is only legal in a few regions such as Maniquideh, the seat of the pontiff. Although covert, the church is powerful in Azeryan, Karejia, Dalkesh, and Hepekeria.

The church has been present on Hârn for over a thousand years. The chief temple and seat of the Hârnic primate is in Coranan, and there are also temples hidden in Golotha, Shiran, and Tashal. Since 664 a group of heretical clerics have operated a temple in the wilderness near the ruins of Bejist.

Symbols & Regalia

Clerical robes are loose fitting, to allow freedom of movement, and are usually black in color. Ranking clergy wear an over-robe of scarlet. All priests carry daggers. A temple assassin wears a broad belt of white cloth to be stained red with a victim's blood as proof of his murder. During ceremonies masters don the skull-mask denoting imminent death. Other symbols include *Dekejis* the cat, *Shinkra-Akra* the translucent skull, and *Nava-Shak-Ara*, Naveh's ebony knife.



A Dezena (Master of Ritual). He wears a scarlet mantle, symbolic of high office, and the Ko-Shinkra, the skull mask of imminent death. This mask is worn by Dezenas before a sacrifice, and by other masters when ordering a Herth-Akan. The priest also wears a white belt that denotes him as a temple assassin and he bears the two razor sharp daggers carried by all Navehan clerics.

Sinan was shown that eventually the gods would make war again, changing Kelestia and bringing chaos to the world. Only those who accepted "the discipline of the Lifter of Lives" would survive the cataclysm. The return of chaos, he was told, is inevitable, and it will rid Kethira of "the brutish and profane'. Those who give their lives unquestioningly to Naveh and help "purify mankind" will gain the protection of the god, in the chaos. They will survive as virtual deities.

> *"Shed all fleshly ties, and give wholly unto the Master thy life, for it is His to take at whim. Thy mortality is transient and valueless, save that it be dedicated to the will of He who cleanses and winnows the passing moment."*

Sinan traveled widely, expounding his doctrine and performing miracles to substantiate his claim to divine guidance. Since many of these miracles involved the sudden death of those who mocked him or tried to do him harm, he gained considerable awed respect and a small cadre of followers.

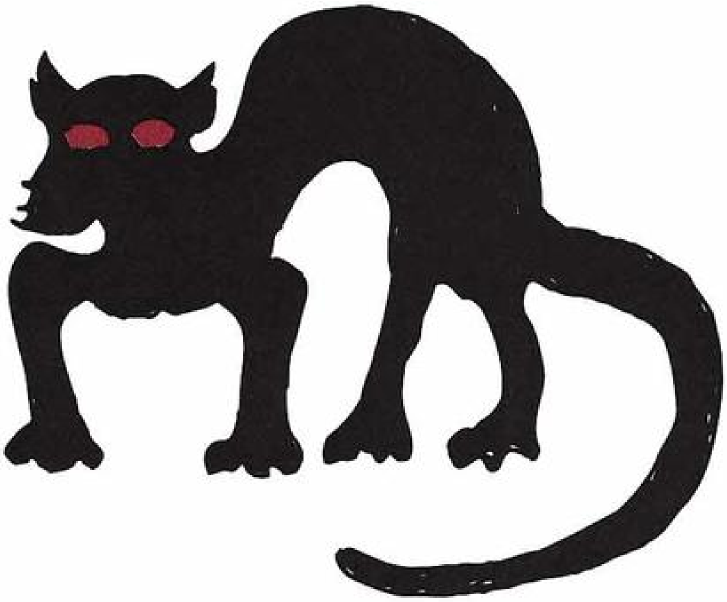
The Fifteen Prophets

After years of preaching, Sinan led his followers to Harsa-Navla. There each was tested. The nature of the tests is not stated in the Revelations, but it is clear they were harsh; many were found wanting and perished.

Those that survived fell into two groups. The most devout, fifteen in number, had the task of establishing the church. The remainder were to assist the fifteen prophets, and do their bidding as though it were the will of Naveh himself. They were sent from Harsa-Navla, "even to the uttermost reaches of Kethira", to prepare for the cataclysmic strife that would eventually come. Sinan, his task accomplished, was ritually murdered by the prophets.

The movements of the prophets can only be surmised after their departure from Harsa-Navla, although it is clear that at least three (or their successors) reached western Lythia. There is evidence that one prophet, Taurin Halfhand, arrived on Hârn during the latter stages of the Atani Wars and took part in the Battle of Sorrows that ended Sindarin rule of the island.

The early prophets and their successors acted with such subtlety that there are almost no references to the church in secular histories until the first century TR. Temples were covert, and they made no attempt to proselytize.



DEKEJIS

A demonic servant of Naveh, appearing in the form of a black, red-eyed cat. Dekejis was once the favorite pet of Halea, but Naveh (who had been spurned by Halea) stole the cat, blinding and castrating it in revenge. After the goddess cast Dekejis out, Naveh took the feline in, granting it the red eyes with which it can perceive heat and see in darkness. He Naveh permits Dekejis to devour the eyes and genitals of mortal victims promising that they would restore his own lost organs. Although Dekejis eagerly consumes both delicacies, no evidence of the truth of Naveh's promise exists. Humans who lack one or the other are said to bear the stigmata of Dekejis, or the curse of Naveh.

THE GYTEVSHA

The Gytevsha are the invisible demonic servants and minions of Naveh. It is said that they were not created by the god, but that he found them in the "deepest reaches of the void, of which they are but part". The Gytevsha are at their weakest in daylight hours, and their various powers are most effective at night or in shadow. They are not worshipped, but are treated with the respect befitting their unearthly powers. There are three principle Gytevsha:

Gekrish

The "Hands of Despair" settles accounts with those who have broken faith. It is said that he dispatches such unfortunates with his talons, reaching inside the body and stilling the heart forever. In some cases, Gekrish may "possess" the body, tormenting the resident aura, before slaying it.

Krasula

The "Hunter of Sleep" is charged with delivering nightmares. Krasula is unique among the Gytevsha in that he can take visible shape. He appears as a small boy with one eye of palest blue and the other of deepest black.

Vesha

The "Mouth of Falsehood" spreads deceit and confusion among mortals. It is sometimes believed that every lie told by men strengthens Vesha, and that every unpleasant truth that is faced by them, wounds him.

The Lesser Gytevsha

Each of the Gytevsha is served by entities known as the *Lesser Gytevsha*. They are minor spirits with powers suitable to their task. Naveh uses them as messengers, bearers of divine visions, and for occasional physical intervention on the mortal planes of existence.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Ritual murder and suicide play major roles in the worship of Naveh. Such deaths are believed to serve the god, either by providing him with another loyal servant, or by moving another step towards inevitable "chaos and triumph". In addition, various pyrotechnic, optical and mechanical trickery is involved in worship.

Navehan rituals often involve drug-induced trances. Priests ingest various hallucinogenic or stimulant drugs before and during ceremonies.

The Navehan church holds no formal ceremonies for its lay adherents. Such persons generally worship privately in whatever manner they deem appropriate and pay tribute to the church. Even the most rudimentary religious instruction is rare.

Dezenaka

This is the most important monthly ritual of the Navehan church. Held on the night of the new moon, most clerics prepare for it by ingesting quantities of Alanal, a powerful hallucinogen, producing euphoria, illusions and susceptibility to suggestion. Dezenaka rituals includes various "miracles" and at least one blood sacrifice. This is provided either by an aging cleric who "longs for the sable streets of Kamil" and commits ritual suicide, or some hapless victim captured for the purpose. In either case, simple bloodletting is not enough; a degree of "artistry" must be involved for the sacrifice to be holy to Naveh. Dezenaka rituals end with a ceremonial feast in which the blood of the sacrifice is mixed with wine and consumed by the attending priests. This is believed to reinforce the clerics' sense of sacred mission.

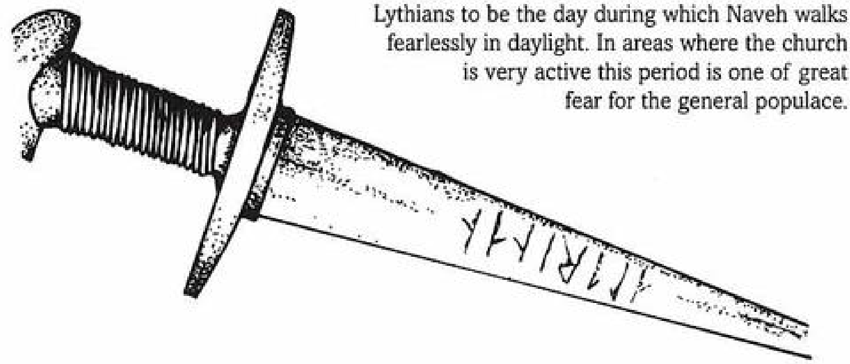
Occasionally Dezenaka rituals include a ceremony by which one cleric is selected to murder a chosen victim. The victim is determined by the chosen cleric touching one of several daggers held by the high priest. Each blade has engraved upon it the name of its intended victim and can be used for no other purpose but their death. The killing must take place within the month. Victims range from the lowliest beggar to the most powerful of lords; the choice is believed to be determined by Naveh and is said to further his patient aims.

The Herth Akan

A punishment ritual of the temple of Naveh. A miscreant cleric is given a one hour head start and for three successive days and nights thereafter must evade the murderous pursuit of seven of his temple brothers. The ritual is occasionally used against enemies of the temple, or against those that the temple has contracted to kill. If the victim evades death for the required period, he is permitted to live, while the failed brothers will commit ceremonial suicide. Persons who survive are highly respected.

The Night of Shadows

The most important day of the Navehan year, the Night of Shadows occurs on the thirtieth of Navek. It is said that on this night, Naveh and his minions are strongest. Ceremonies are similar to those of the Dezenaka, although at least three murder victims are selected. These must be slain before midnight of the following day. This day, the first of Morgat, is called *Shadowmath*, thought by most Lythians to be the day during which Naveh walks fearlessly in daylight. In areas where the church is very active this period is one of great fear for the general populace.



KAMIL

Naveh dwells in the bleak city of Kamil, "whose ebon streets are silent, and where Night Eternal reigns". Some believe that a part of Kamil exists both on Kethira and on Yashain. This concurrence is believed to occur at Harsa-Navla, "The Place Most Holy", the semi-legendary site of the foundation of the church.

Kamil is inhabited by the Gytevsha and the souls of the most disciplined and devout of Naveh's mortal adherents. These mortals exist in a paradise of eternal obedience. Some believe that Naveh gifts the most loyal of these with the powers of the Gytevsha.

> *"Those of us who have achieved spiritual perfection through obedience will be taken by our Lord to the city of Kamil, "where Night eternal reigns". There we shall dwell unseen with our master and the Gytevsha until the Final Wars. Though Kelestia will be destroyed in those wars, our Lord shall protect us by taking us to Harsa-Navla, the Place Most Holy, where, pure in spirit, mighty in strength, and capable of all that our Master asks of us, we Faithful Ones will spend all eternity in the service of the Lord of the Last Illusion."*

Where did the world come from?

In the beginning was chaos. From this came the First Gods, who strove against each other. At length, the surviving First Gods withdrew from conflict, leaving Kelestia to the Lesser Gods and mortals, who, undisciplined and ill-tempered, continued to fight on. After eons of war, the handful of surviving Lesser Gods agreed to a truce.

Eventually, the gods will again make war on each other, destroying themselves and restoring the primal chaos. All will be destroyed, except Naveh, the Lord of the Last Illusion, and those who have embraced his discipline.

ORGANIZATION

The self-sufficient temple defines the Navehan church. Most temples are located in urban areas, and acquire most supplies by theft or tribute. Navehan temples are always covert, even where lawful. Consequently, outsiders regard the church with speculative and misinformed (if understandable) dread. The internal discipline of the church is legendary.

NAGARA (Pontiff)

The Nagara dwells in Maniquideh, where the church of Naveh has considerable, although subtle, influence over the secular authorities. Navehans acknowledge that he has a special relationship with the god, although they do not recognize that he is supreme, deeming the Oracle at Harsa-Navla his superior. The Nagara is always selected from the clerics of the Maniquideh temple.

BE'ARA TULNA (Holy Office)

This organization functions as messengers and inquisitors of the church. In theory, its members answer only to Naveh for their actions. Generally, they travel, seeking disobedient "heretics". It seems likely that some of the most skilled assassins in western Lythia are members of the Be'ara Tulna.

SHUGANAL (Primate)

The church of Naveh has divided western Lythia into several primacies, few of which correspond with secular, national boundaries. The Shuganal's power is primarily advisory, interpreting the edicts of the pontiff, and setting regional policies.

TEMPLE HIERARCHY

The responsibilities of the priests within Navehan temples are virtually identical throughout western Lythia. Advancement usually occurs by murdering the incumbent office holder. A formal challenge to mortal combat or a stealthy murder are considered equally appropriate. A successful killing is deemed evidence of Naveh's approval.

GARANA (High Priest)

The Garana is the absolute master of his temple. His word is law and there is no appeal of his decisions. He sets temple policy and presides at all temple rituals.

DRANATHA (Priests)

Dranatha, sometimes called deacons, perform various guard and administrative duties. In most temples, five Drantha serve as temple masters. The competition for these offices is frantic and deadly. Only those who are highly skilled and utterly ruthless can expect any job security.

ARASHA: The Drantha who governs in the Garana's absence. He is also responsible for the instruction and duties of the senior acolytes (deacons).

WOLREN: The Master of Archives and Treaures.

TARAVA: The Master of Discipline, responsible for administering the strict code of discipline, and punishing disobedience or failure. Most acolytes act as his informers.

PRADA: The Master of Acolytes, responsible for their training, as well as the temple's day-to-day functions.

DEZENA: The Master of Ritual conducts ceremonial functions and is also responsible for teaching the mysteries and doctrine of the church.

ADRANATHA (Acolytes)

Navehan temples recruit by kidnapping infants or, less often, by female clerics deliberately conceiving. The child is raised within the temple and taught Navehan

What of the other gods?

Agrik is an undisciplined fool. He thinks raw might will enable him to dominate Kelestia. He scorns our Lord, mistaking wisdom and subtlety for cowardice. Little does Agrik know that physical might is an illusion and it will be his undoing. His followers fight amongst themselves. Unified, they would pose a threat, but a single Navas-Kara can easily start a crippling temple war.

Halea is concerned only with the fleeting illusions of the physical world. Her followers have neither the strength of will nor the purity of spirit to see beyond the veil of pleasures into the eternal realm of Truth. When the Cleansing comes, Halea and her followers, too accustomed to pleasure, will be the first to perish.

Ilvir the Brooder works his obscene arts and disregards the approaching cataclysm. In the end, his monstrous children will perish, for they are soulless beasts. Their Creator will be left alone, unprepared, helpless to prevent his own destruction. Beware his followers, lest their indifference conceal a plan.

Larani prides herself on her discipline, but then she loses her self-control and becomes as violent. In the end, her hatred of the Warlord of Balgashang will overcome her discipline, and she too will disregard the Concordat. Feed her hatred, and that of her followers, by committing acts for which Agrik is blamed. This will hasten the onset of the Final Wars, and deflect attention from us.

Morgath unwittingly furthers Our Master's goals. Driven mad by Bukrai, he wishes to hasten the return of the Chaos. Unlike our Master, however, Morgath does not envision surviving the End. We need not oppose him or his followers, for their aims coincide with those of Our Far-Sighted Master.

Peoni nourishes the naive hope of saving this world and its unworthy inhabitants. What little strength she has, she squanders reducing the sufferings of the wretches who follow her. Let her and her followers pursue their hopeless tasks; it will profit them naught in the end.

Sarajin, The Gray Slayer, knows that the Final Wars are coming, but thinks that strength, bravery, and honor will triumph. In the end, Sarajin and his followers will perish like all others who place their faith in strength.

Save-K'nor is not to be trusted. The Divine Fool is not as foolish as he seems. Be on guard against his followers, for they are subtle and shrewd. Infiltrate their ranks, learn what they know and confound them with lies. Steal their artifacts. Eliminate those who pose a threat.

Siem knows that the End is coming. He has withdrawn to his Blessed Realm, where he laments while we prepare. He may have a cowardly plan to save himself. But there is not room enough in eternity for both Siem and Our Master. If the Final Wars do not destroy him and his demonic hordes, then we must finish the task.

doctrine and basic ritual. On its eleventh birthday the child is declared Adranatha, and training intensifies. Acolytes perform all menial tasks.

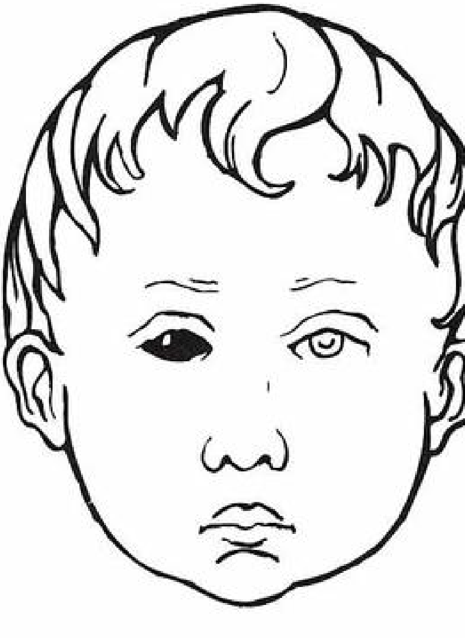
When Adrantha demonstrate sufficient skill to the Master of Acolytes, they undertake the ritual of passage to become Dranatha. This grim ceremony requires that two acolytes stalk one another in the temple maze. The acolyte who wounds or kills the other, without himself being injured, is declared Dranatha. A loser who survives remains in the ranks of the Adranatha. If both are wounded, neither advance. Acolytes may attempt the ritual twice. A second failure necessitates ritual suicide.

NAVAS-KARA (Temple Assassin)

This is a honorary title rather than an official rank. When appended to a cleric's name, it signifies that he has murdered at least one outsider. Such killings are either to further the doctrinal or political ends of the church, or are commissioned by external sources. The approach for such services is usually through contacts in the Lia-Kavair, the "Thieves' Guild"of western Lythia, which pays tribute to the church in most regions. Fees are exorbitant and the Church is prone to refuse contracts without explanation.

The church sometimes attempts to place assassins among the households of secular lords; preparation for the day that Naveh requires that death. The patience of these hidden assassins is legendary.

One apocryphal story tells of an encounter between a Navehan envoy and a noble who intended to stamp out the church within his jurisdiction. The envoy said his message was to be delivered only in private. The lord, understandably cautious, had the Navehan searched before dismissing his courtiers, having only his guards remain. The envoy reminded him that the message was for his ears alone, and the lord dismissed all but four guards. He demanded to hear the message, telling the Navehan that the remaining guards were staying, since they were as trusted as if they were his own sons. Thereupon the messenger turned to the guards, and asked "Were I to order you to slay this lord, would you?" As one, the four guards drew their daggers saying "Command us as you wish." The envoy, having delivered his message, left with the four guards, and the lord rethought his plans.



Krasula
The "Hunter of Sleep"

The Night People

Wandering rural worshippers of Naveh, the Night People are well-known, little understood, and widely hated or feared. The night people travel in family groups of 6-36 in black wagons festooned with brightly colored flags and painted images. They camp in a fallow fields, trading with the villagers and hosting mad revels to the wild beat of their drums and the insane screeching of their violins, until the lord's men send them away.

The night people are known for their strange powers. Usually there is a seer among them, and they are great gamblers, dancers, and tellers of tales. It is considered bad luck to kill a Night Person; the murderer is always found dead within a short time. Common folk look upon the Night People with a peculiar mix of fascination and loathing. Landless and unprotected, they are the lowest of the low. Yet they possess strange powers and always have thrilling tales of the world beyond the manor.

As independent temples, bands of Night People are not tied to the urban temples, but they maintain an excellent symbiosis, serving as intelligence-gatherers and fencing stolen goods.

Navehan Funerals

It is rumored that Navehans eat their dead, but this is not generally true. The Navehans have little respect for a corpse. They believe the mortal body must be totally destroyed in order to set the spirit free of mortal constraints. Quiet ritual cremation is the most common method.

Navehans revere the spirit of a dead comrade. Once released, the spirit moves immediately to its narm-akán (parting place). This is always a location of some significance to the departed, most often a favorite room. It is the responsibility of the spirit's surviving comrades to find this location and go there to perform a *shai-tovakan* (ceremony of freeing) to permit the soul to finally sever its bonds with the mortal plane and depart in peace. Finding the parting place may not be easy; sometimes an extensive search and/or divination are required.

The shai-tovakan consists of three days of vigil and chanting. The spirit can, it is believed, make the transition without a shai-tovakan, but it is more painful.

NAVEH 6

DEKEJIS' GIFT II

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Permits subject to move as silently as a cat. The surface walked upon will rarely make noise, though footprints are left.

GEKRISH'S SONG II

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Chant (loud)
Range: RSI Hexes **Duration:** Instantaneous

Causes an immediate WIL x4 (MS) or WIL x3 (CS) check on all within *Range*, those who fail must flee to safety the fastest way they know.

VESHA'S TALE II

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: RSI feet **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) mins.

One victim within *Range*, selected by the cleric, will believe any reasonable lie for *Duration*.

AGILITY OF DEKEJIS III

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Increases subject's *Climbing*, *Acrobatics*, and *Jumping* skills by 10 (MS) or 30 (CS).

EYES OF DEKEJIS III

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Permits subject to see in complete darkness for *Duration*. The subject's eyes perceive gradations in temperature as variations in color. Subject cannot see normally for *Duration*.

FLASH FROM KAMIL III

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI yards **Duration:** One min. special penalty

Creates a sudden, blinding flash, causing anyone within *Range* to lose sight of the cleric for at least one round. Anyone within *Range* also suffers a special penalty of −10 on all skills for one minute.

GYTEVSHA'S PASSAGE III

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI feet **Duration:** One skill use

Gives insight into the type of mechanism inside a lock, and a bonus to *Lockcraft:* MS +10 or CS +30 for one skill use.

HOUSE IN KAMIL III

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer (silent)
Range: RML feet **Duration:** 10 minutes

Cleric can visualize and remember floorplan of building within RML feet. The cleric can attempt to describe or draw the vision, throughout *Duration*.

KRASULA'S PILLOW III

Time: 15-RSI mins **Ritual:** Song
Range: Touch object **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) nights.

Instills a tiny portion of Krasula's essence into an object, traditionally a pillow. One who sleeps touching the object experiences terrible nightmares, usually views of Kamil. On CS, priest can describe the nightmare.

KRASULA'S WHISPER III

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: RML feet **Duration:** Instantaneous

Inserts a specific thought into the mind of a victim. The thought must be no more than one simple sentence. If the victim is awake, he may engage in Mental Conflict. Sleeping victims have no defense. The victim may or may not (GM discretion) be influenced by the suggestion.

VESHA'S SENSE III

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Spoken Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Subject's sense attributes are increased by +4 for *Duration*.

GEKRISH'S GUIDING HAND IV

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Spoken Prayer
Range: RSI Miles **Duration:** Instant

Cleric is informed of the precise location (at that instant) of one chosen person within *Range*.

NAVEH'S CLOAK IV

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Permits cleric, who must remain still, to escape notice for *Duration* unless someone is actively searching. On a CS, even an active search will not notice the recipient.

TALONS OF GEKRISH V

Time: 15-RSI secs **Ritual:** Chant
Range: N/A **Duration:** One strike

Any edge or point strike with a dagger will find a vulnerable artery at the strike location and sever it, causing (GM discretion) a K5 strike.

The Bringer of the Life Renewed,
Maker of Balms,
Lady of Truth,
Everliving Daughter of White Virtue,
Guardian of the Meek,
Lady of Industrious Labors and the Ripe Harvest,
Confidant of Lovers.

Peoni is the kindest and most gentle of the gods. She will accept into her fold any with an honest heart. She loves the scholarly who use their knowledge in service of others, the poor, the meek, the innocent and the powerless, the hard working and those who love with true love. She is the patron goddess of healing and agriculture, and is closely associated with the turning of the seasons. She demands that her followers be gentle and kind, but is forgiving of those who transgress.

Peoni is most often represented as a young girl with hands worn red from her labors, and is symbolized by spring flowers or by the fruits of agriculture. It is said that she prefers white flowers and that the daisy is her favorite. Peoni and her divine servants have never taken violent action against other deities; they followed the Concordat of the Illimitable Tome even before it was signed. Peoni does not struggle with the other gods for dominion over Kelestia.

It is often held that Peoni is Larani's mother, in spirit if not in fact. Larani's followers are the staunch protectors of Peoni's church. Laranian warriors often guard Peonian temples, but this is only one aspect of the working affiliation of the two churches.

Theological Mission

The Church of Peoni is concerned with life on Kethira. The afterlife is only a product of what people make of the lives they are given. By providing the guidance people need to lead good lives on Kethira, the church ensures a good afterlife in Valon.

Social Mission

Neither Peoni nor her followers press their religion by warlike means. Their weapons are persuasion and example, and they seek to convert the defenseless, who are often ignored by other religions. The Church of Peoni stresses the virtue of being satisfied with one's station in life knowing it helps to prevent civil unrest. It strives to ease the hardships of life by offering assistance to the poor and starving.

Typical Clergy

Peonian clergy have a strong sense of obligation to help others. Paternal discipline and maternal nurturing are found to varying degrees in clergy of both genders. They are often the last to stop work, the last to eat, and the first to awaken.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Earth and fertility cults have been common among the human tribes of Lythia for as long as men have farmed and kept livestock. The concept of maternal soil evolved with the growth of agriculture. Modern theologians believe that these early cults had Peoni as their common object, regardless of the name by which they called her. As people refined their agricultural practices, worship of Peoni became more organized, combining many of the early cults with more sophisticated concepts.

Unification of the Aspects

The nature of Peonianism is to seek the common ground with others. Peonians tend to celebrate the discovery of a new aspect of their goddess, rather than fight over the rightness of views. Even before the unification, those who worshipped the different aspects of Peoni were friendly toward each other. The unification of the church, traditionally dated 594 BT, was a bloodless marriage.

Geography

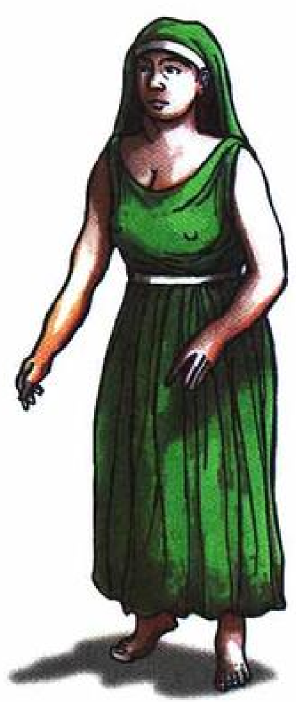
Peoni is the most commonly worshipped deity in western Lythia. The countryside is dotted with peasant-made shrines to Peoni and her clerics are often found among the poor and sick, blessing their labors, and easing their tasks with boundless compassion.

In a few places, such as Rethem on Hârn, Peonianism is officially illegal, but unofficially ignored by the secular authorities.

Symbols & Regalia

The clerics of Peoni change their garb with the season, wearing white in the winter, green in spring, beige in summer, and yellow in autumn. The number four is significant, symbolizing the four Aerlathos and the four seasons. Flowers and fruits of the harvest are also used as symbols. Peonian churches are often decorated with sheaves of wheat or other crops during harvest time. The regalia of the Peonian church is simple and functional and this is seen as a symbol of humility.

Priests assigned to special offices are given pendants to wear as identification. Mendicants wear small silver tetrahedrons upon their breasts. Orderial badges are modest in size, and made of cheap cloth, as are most priestly garments; the church has better uses for its wealth.



An Ebasethe of the female order of the Balm of Joy. She is dressed in the green robes of spring. The white band on her headdress signifies that she is the assistant of the Lerovana. Ebasethe assigned to the Pelnala wear a beige band, and those assisting the Avasana wear yellow. Clerics not on semi-permanent assignment to a temple master (most) wear no identifying band. Temple masters wear pendants to signify their office.

The Aerlathos

The first visitation of the Aerlathos occurred circa 600 BT. The Aerlathos were four prophets, one each from the north, south, east, and west. Two were men, two women. Each claimed to have been gifted with the same vision, that, "those who worship the cycles of earth shall be as one".

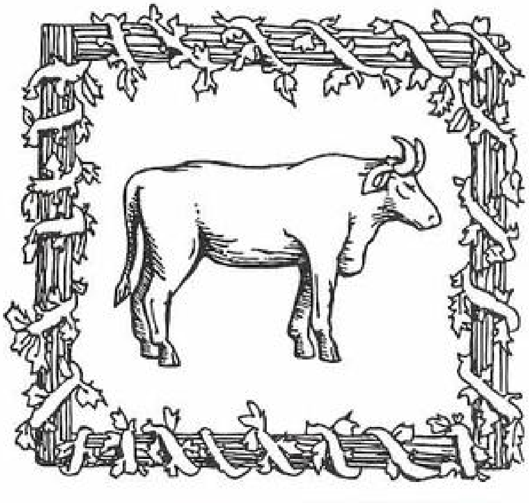
At the time, many of the earth cults had fallen from the true ways by introducing elements of violence and retribution into their beliefs. Some had even introduced human or animal sacrifice into their rites, offering blood to enrich the soil. Ceremonies often devolved into orgiastic revels. Hence, according to tradition, the Aerlathos were summoned by Peoni to codify the beliefs and renew the purity of her followers.

The four preached eloquently to the common folk, and made their separate ways to a common destination that each had seen only in a vision. Everywhere they went the crops were blessed. Word spread of their pilgrimage and Peonians celebrated their newfound unity. By the time the four simultaneously reached the tiny village of Perna, there were several thousand clerics in their train. The four, who had never met, spoke in perfect unison of the need to reconsecrate the priesthood to the principles of the Lady of Labors. They blessed all the assembled priests and each male Aerlathos married a female Aerlathos in a double wedding to symbolize the unity of the church. At this point, according to tradition, the Aerlathos were transported to Valon, but not before they promised three more visitations that would occur, "when the terror of war shall beset thee and the congregations shall as babes put aside their faith for bright trinkets".

Alamarel

Alamarel was a pious and humble woman. She became the first pontiff of the Peonian church and her first task was to conduct the marriages of the Aerlathos. Under her guidance, the assembled clerics built a temple to the glory of Peoni. A few stayed in Perna to form the nucleus of a central bureaucracy, but most departed to spread the word of Peoni as mendicant clerics dependent on the charity of simple farmers. Alamarel encouraged the proliferation of temples to be supported by the voluntary tithes of the laity. Their purpose was to provide sanctuaries for the purification and education of priests.

Priests of the early church are remembered for their saintly patience and superhuman energy in the face of persecution by other religions. Many were martyred by those who rejected their doctrine. The story of Safransi of the Sheaf, who was boiled alive by Agrikan fanatics rather than renounce her beliefs, is an oft told story. Safransi continued to bless her murderers until the moment of her death. This kind of sacrifice earned respect for the church from all quarters. When non-adherents came to realize that Peonians were harmless, willing to aid almost anyone with their healing arts, the church was left in peace and was able to spread with little interference. Peonian evangelists directed their main efforts at those unwanted by other faiths.



Calendar

The most important days of the Peonian year are the *Restoration Festival* on the fourth day of Peonu, and the *Harvest Home* on the fourth of Azura. The origins of these festivals are ancient. The Restoration Festival symbolizes the renewal of life after the cold of winter and the Harvest Home is a celebration to bless the harvest. The Harvest Home involves four days of prayer, meditation, and fasting, concluding with as lavish a feast of newly harvested crops as possible.

THE PEONIAN FAMILY

Peoni has several semi-divine servants.

BELSIRASIN (The Weeper)

Belsirasin is often portrayed as a weeping young warrior, without weapons. He is said to shed tears for every lie told by man. Belsirasin is the lord of virtue and truth, and the least forgiving of Peoni's servants.

MAERMAL (Lord of Labor)

Maermal is the lord of honest labor. He is portrayed as a massive bronze ox of great tenacity, who labors without thought of reward. When his work is disturbed or wrecked he starts again without complaint. His is the patience of the earth, and he symbolizes the ability of common folk to triumph in their day-to-day endeavors.

TIRRALA (Handmaiden of Renewal)

Tirrala, also called the Foremost of Healers, is the patron of physicians. She usually appears as a slim young woman with tired, drawn features. In her right hand she bears a surgeon's knife and in her left she carries a small urn. These are the symbols of the Society of Physicians.

YSELDE (The Trothmaker)

Yselde is the mistress of honorable love. She smoothes the difficulties that lovers may marry, and those with unrequited love visit her shrines seeking guidance. Newlyweds pray for the blessing of children. She is usually portrayed as a heavyset, good humored woman of middle years, carrying a basket or sometimes a suckling child.

Burial Customs

Peonian graveyards are often located near a parish church, or on a nearby hillside. Friends and relations gather, the priest performs a simple ceremony, and the casket is lowered into the ground. A eulogy is often read by a loved one. It is a sad occasion, though many Peonians celebrate the passing of loved ones with an informal party.

Peonian graves are usually modest. Gravestones or small monuments, preferably made of stone (to last) are common.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Perhaps the most important element in post-unification doctrine was the principle of automatic forgiveness, unique to the church of Peoni. The idea that any sin, no matter how heinous, could be mended through sincere confession, sets the church apart from other religions, most of which tend to exact severe retribution. Another unusual element is the fallibility of the priesthood. Peoni's clerics are accorded respect, but it is recognized that they are human beings and sinners. Even the pontiff, while possessed of special wisdom, is deemed fallible.

Prayer, meditation, and song are common features of worship, as is fasting. Sacrifice of agricultural produce is typical at harvest time. Many Peonians donate part of their income to the church to support its charitable activities. If a district is prosperous and there is little need for the dispensing of alms, temples forward contributions to the regional or central authorities for use in needy regions. Hence, despite its self-denying policies, the church often has a sizable cash reserve.

PEONIAN RITUALS

Peonians practice two forms of worship: the Greater and Lesser Sapeleh (high and low rites). The Lesser Sapeleh can be attended by any adherent of Peoni, while participation in Greater Sapeleh is restricted to priests and acolytes.

Lesser Sapeleh

These are lay services and include such events as the communal blessing of the planting and harvest, or the celebration of saint's days. Any priest can lead a Lesser Sapeleh, although in most temples they are led by the Pelnala or one of the other masters. Persons attending the mass usually bring a sacrifice or donation in kind or coin, according to their means. Most temples hold a Lesser Sapeleh mass on the 4th, 12th, 20th, and 28th days of each month.

Temples have chambers available to individuals or small groups who wish to worship privately. These private ceremonies consist of prayer or meditation which may or may not be assisted by an Ebasethe. Peonian worshippers who wish to make confession employ one such chamber, unburdening their sin on an Ebasethe who then suggests a penance, most often a labor for the church to "renew the spirit". Ebasethe who hear confessions of serious or violent crimes try to convince the culprits to submit to secular justice.

Greater Sapeleh

The Greater Sapeleh is a purification rite that begins on 14th of each month and is undertaken only by priests above the rank of Esolani. For four days, the priests seclude themselves (as much as is practical) to fast, meditate, and pray, while maintaining silence. During the rite, they perform only essential tasks, such as tending to the most seriously ill patients in their hospital. All other functions are performed by Esolani. On the third day of the Ceremony, the 16th day of the month, the priests gather in the hall of ritual for sixteen hours of silent prayer. On the last day of the Ceremony they gather again for four hours of meditation. Reslava also partake of the Purification Ceremony, arranging to visit a temple during the appropriate days whenever practical.

A special Purification Ceremony is held in the first month of each season. This Greater Sapeleh is followed by the "Turning", a special rite open to the Esolani. The priests discard their garb in a heap before the altar. One robe is selected from the pile and ceremonially burned (the rest are laundered and put away for next year). After the burning, the priests are called in turn by the Pelnala who gifts them with clean robes. Clerics of Peoni wear a different hue in each season. At this time, insignia of office/promotion are also distributed. The Pelnala praises those who have served particularly well during the preceding quarter. The Turning is symbolic of renewal and the casting off of earthly impurities. It concludes with hymns of praise to the season ending and the season beginning.

The Prophet Harbraen

The prophet Harbraen founded a mission to the barbarians of Shorkyne c.425 BT and taught those nomadic tribesmen the benefits of farming. After performing several miracles, including the raising a child from the dead, Harbraen recruited followers from the tribesmen awho then spread his gentle message throughout the region.

Harbraen's success came to the attention of a wandering band of Agrikan priests led by a fanatic known to (Peonian) history as Gusryl the Cannibal. The Agrikans, having had little success at winning converts, plotted to make an example of the prophet Harbraen. They seized and carried him into the wilderness. There, Harbraen suffered hideous tortures for eight days before being put to death. Gusryl deposited the mutilated corpse in the center of Hasbraen's adopted village, proclaiming the "Triumph of the Reaper" and preaching his brutal doctrine to the horrified villagers. As Gusryl spoke, lush grass grew from the packed earth. This miraculous growth spurred the wrath of Harbraen's flock who attacked Gusryl and his band, driving them from the village.

The grass grew quickly. By the next morning, it had covered Harbraen's body and a square sixteen feet across. Later, some who lay upon the grass were healed of illnesses or otherwise blessed. These events resulted in the village of Harbraen becoming the destination of pilgrims seeking the benefices of "Harbraen's Plot". As the number of pilgrims increased, so did the number of resident priests. Eshaela, who had been foremost among Harbraen's disciples, began building a temple fronting Harbraen's Plot, funding the construction with the generous donations of pilgrims. The village of Harbraen has since grown into a city which is the seat of the Peonian Primate of Shorkyne.

The Meadows of Valon

Peoni dwells in the enchanted meadows of Valon where it is forever spring. Valon is an impossibly verdant field of flowers, rich in delicious nectar, that regenerate themselves overnight. This is the heaven of Peoni's worshippers. Here, in humble but pleasant cottages, dwell those who have labored hard in life. Most believe Valon is on Yashain.

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The early church had no central authority. The building of the temple of Perna in 594 BT is often cited as the founding of central authority, but the hundreds and then thousands of wandering priests recognized no authority between themselves and the deity for many centuries. The Council of Perna in 293 TR, held almost 900 years after the founding of the temple, actually created the Peonian Hapalanate and established the current structure of the church.

THE HAPALAN (Pontiff)

The Peonian Pontiff dwells in Perna, which is still the most popular destination of Peonian pilgrims. Historically, Hapalani have not attempted to become secular lords, although their influence in Perna is great. The office of Hapalan alternates between male and female clerics; as of 720 the Hapalan is Vialle of Aradil, a saintly and intelligent woman of 54. She became Hapalan in 709. Neither she nor her predecessors have claimed to be infallible. They act and speak only as spiritual guides, and are relieved of virtually all administrative tasks by the Pelclunia to foster this role. The moral pronouncements of the pontiff are accorded great respect by adherents and are usually obeyed voluntarily.

THE PELCLUNIA (Cardinals)

The sixteen members of the Pelclunia serve as advisors to the Hapalan. Each represents a distinct geographical region and is appointed by the Hapalan in consultation with the appropriate primate. When the Hapalan dies the Pelclunia chooses a successor. In this they are said to be guided by Peoni herself and may select anyone, excepting only themselves. Usually, they select a primate or other highly advanced cleric. However, in 602, for example, the Pelclunia chose Derinea of Shulde, a Reslava from Melderyn. The choices of the Pelclunia always seem suitable in retrospect; Hapalans have been, almost without exception, competent and devout servants of Peoni.

REGIONAL AUTHORITY

The church of Peoni divides the known world into primacies for administrative purposes. The borders of many of these primacies coincide with the political boundaries of secular nations, although some primacies (Hârn for example) contain several states. The most important task handled bythe primacies is to collectß and distribute relief money throughout the region as needed.

MEPELEH (Primate)

Mepeleh are appointed by the Pontiff (or Pelclunia) and are responsible for the administration of the church in a primacy. Mepelehs appoint bishops in consultation with the Pelclunia.

SULAPLYN (Bishop)

The governor of an ecclesiastical "fief" containing several temples. The office is essentially administrative, but does involve some theological interpretation. Sulaplyn appoint the High Priests within their region.

TEMPLE AUTHORITY

THE PELNALA (High Priest/Priestess)

The Pelnala is the master or mistress of the temple. They perform most temple rituals and serve as chairman of a council of the other temple masters. The Pelnala is often in close contact with any nearby temples of Larani, and deals with them regarding cooperation or assistance.

What of the other gods?

Tell me the truth about...

Agrik and his followers are filled with bitter, terrible rage. Like wounded animals, they are dangerous, and must be treated with respect. It is difficult to stay calm in their presence, but we must try. Only Peoni's love can heal their torment and bring them salvation.

Halea beguiles her followers with wealth, beauty, and physical excess. We are all tempted by such lures, particularly in our crowded and unchaste cities. Haleans are confused, not wicked. We must strive to remind them that their reckless pursuit of pleasure and gold brings pain to others and thence to themselves.

Ilvir is a neglectful master. He provides little guidance or sustenance for his followers, who deserve better. We should always be ready to help Ilvirans for they are good folk who know and heed the rhythms of the earth.

Larani and her followers strive to do good. Their mission to protect the weak and uphold the social order is noble. Just as Laranians protect our bodies from the physical dangers of this world, so must we ensure that their pride, strength, and warlike rigor do not lead them into moral danger. Ours is a special partnership, but we must never be afraid to provide moral leadership.

Morgath and his minions are insane, made so by the malign influence of Bukrai. They can only be met with a resolute commitment to the principles of peace on which the Concordat is based. Never forget that Morgathians are victims of their god's madness. The opportunity to heal a lost soul is an opportunity to be taken whenever possible.

Naveh and his followers practice their evil and malice in unpredictable ways. The will and reason behind their violence is as much a mystery as the thoughts of a Navek blizzard. There is little to be done about the Thief of Night, except to help one another to recover from his foul attentions.

Sarajin's followers are loyal and true to their own kith and kin, but bloodthirsty barbarians to all others. They are to be feared, for they have the violence of the wolf or the lion. But they kill from ignorance. We must teach them peace, honor, and love whenever possible.

Save K'nor preserves the Concordat upon which the existence of Kelestia depends. To him and his priests, we owe gratitude and respect. It is sad that they so often neglect the rhythms of the earth, and the warmth of family. We need to gently remind them of this loss to their good comfort.

Siem and the Elder Peoples are good and gentle folk who love nature and its rhythms as no others do. Sadly, their love of untamed nature is too strong. They prefer the clay to the pot, the tree to the wood barrel, the forest glade to the grainfield. These are the misguided ways of a dying race and we must help them to understand.

THE SOLANA (Master of Acolytes)

The master responsible for the training of acolytes and assigning their labors. The Master of Acolytes also deals with mendicant clerics who seek accommodation.

THE AVASANA (Master of Archives and Treasures)

The master responsible for the temple records, sacred relics, special artifacts, and such wealth as the temple may possess. The Peonian practice of distributing money to the poor means the monetary resources are often small.

THE LEROVANA (Master of Healing)

In temples which do not maintain a hospital, the Lerovana fills the role of chief physician, ministering to any who need aid. Where a temple maintains a hospital, the Lerovana is in charge of its administration.

THE EBASETHE (Temple priests/priestesses)

The number of Ebasethe vary greatly from temple to temple. They serve where they are needed, gardening, aiding the sick, dispensing alms, hearing confession, giving council, copying manuscripts, etc.

Ebasethe are expected to adhere to a strict moral code. While it is true that Peoni is swift to forgive, she is less tolerant of improper behavior among her clergy. To resist the temptations of mortal man, most Ebasethe are celibate, take a vow of poverty, and many are vegetarians. However, they are not fanatical. It is sometimes said that: "The way of man is the way of temptation. Belittle not – those who succumb – or it is proof only of their humanity. And be not prideful of thy virtue, for pride is among the most perilous of the sins that trouble mortal man."

THE ESOLANI (Acolytes)

Esolani usually join the church between ages 14 – 20. They spend their first few years in the temple laboring at the hundreds of menial tasks. This labor symbolizes the "purification and dedication" of their souls to the goddess and is intended to foster a proper degree of humility. Esolani are instructed in the doctrine of the church. The Avasana is responsible for this training although it is common for Ebasethe to conduct the actual instruction. It is not necessary for Esolani to follow the strict moral code required of Ebasethe. On the other hand, they are not expected to be wenching, roistering, drunkards either. While celibacy and denial are not essential to Esolani, they always speed ordination as Ebasethe. The judgment of when an Esolani has spiritually progressed enough to become Ebasethe is left to the High Priest(ess). The ritual of "graduation" involves fasting and a lengthy solitary vigil before the altar. Many Esolani never become priests, remaining acolytes all their lives. This is not deemed shameful. Many repentant lay sinners become Esolani as an act of penance, either for a fixed period or for the rest of their lives.

RESLAVA (Mendicant)

Reslava are mendicant Ebasethe with license to travel widely in the outside world. They may or may not be attached to a specific temple, but are largely dependent upon the charity of outsiders. Any pious Peonian may become a Reslava by passing the "Reslava-kai Peledaur", the *Passage of Humble Souls.* This test is administered by four Ebasethe. For four days the candidate performs the most menial tasks available while fasting and maintaining a vow of silence. The four Ebasethe then ritually bathe him, and give him four sips of holy water, consumed while facing first east, then south, west, and north. In these directions the candidate also utters the *Praises of the Seasons,* spring, summer, autumn, and winter respectively. After a four hour vigil, knowledge of the mysteries is tested and mastery of at least the Third Circle is required. The candidate now presents the panel with an original Labor of Reverence, usually a prayer, a hymn, or some other work of art dedicated to the glory of Peoni. If the Labor of Reverence is judged adequate, the Pelnala bestows the Reslava'Anama, an amulet in the form of a silver tetrahedron. The entire company then gifts the new Reslava with useful articles, and he exits the temple through the Reslavannon, the "Portal of Mendicants".

THE ANGYLA FESTIVAL

The Angyla Festival is a death and rebirth festival. Angyla always occurs in the summer, typically in the month of Nolus.

Ritual Bathing

Angyla formally begins with the villagers lining up before the village pond or river to be ceremonially washed by the local priest. It is common for everyone to stand or swim about together, while the priest moves from person to person, reciting the appropriate prayers.

Sermon

The sermon has no specific theme, though fables illustrating Peonian virtues are common.

The Labor

After delivering the sermon, the priest leads the villagers to their labor of the day. This might be fixing the church roof or digging a garden. The task is performed by all villagers. With so many people at the priest's disposal, a great number of things might be achieved, but the festival nature of the day is not forgotten, and people are not made to work too long.

Burning the Flag

The concluding event of Angyla is a game simply called "burning the flag".All of the villagers, including children, split roughly into two teams. Husbands and wives must be on different sides. Each side has a "flag" and the object of the game is to capture the other side's flag and bring it to the bonfire for burning. There are no rules, except that only bare hands are allowed in the general melee that ensues. Typically, the majority of villagers play whole-heartedly for some minutes, and then leave the game to the more dedicated players. When a flag is finally captured and taken to the fire, the village gathers around to watch as the flames consume the pole and banner. This event marks the beginning of a final round of feasting and drinking.

Clerical Orders

The division of the Peonian church into celibate male and female orders dates from about 400 BT and was designed to conserve the spiritual purity of the clerics in the face of sexual temptation. It probably developed (in part) as a response to the hedonistic orgies that typified some ceremonies of pre-Aerlathos Peonian worship.

The orders have separate temples, or at least separate wings within common temples. The female order is called the *Balm of Joy;* the male order is the *Irreproachable Order.* They are roughly equal in size and importance, although in some areas one or the other has taken a dominant role. On Hârn the Irreproachable Order looks to the Balm of Joy for leadership.

PEONI 6

Belsirasin's Tears II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer (silent)
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Causes one subject to shed a tear for every lie told.

Mirytha's Shade III

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Line of Sight **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) hours

Offers insight into the reason a ghost haunts a locale or is causing trouble. The priest is then compelled to help the ghost find its way to the next plane of existence. The GM may reveal the information in any suitable manner.

Peace of Valon III

Time: 35-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Creates a spherical zone, radius RSI hexes, around the cleric within which ALL entities with Morality are disinclined to fight. Those wishing to fight must roll higher than 3x MOR each round.

Maermal's Strength III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** RSI hours

Increases subject's *Strength* by 2 (MS) or 5 (CS) for *Duration*. If subject harms someone, *Strength* is decreased (below normal) by the same amount.

Bounty of Maermal III

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** One skill use

Enhances the subject's agricultural or wilderness skills for one skill use: **MS** +20, **CS** +50.

The bonus, at the cleric's option, is applied to one of *Agriculture, Animalcraft, Fishing, Foraging, Herblore, Survival*, or *Tracking* skills. Failure has no effect.

Tirrala's Cure III

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer/Meditation
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** Instant Healing Rolls

Helps overcome wounds with *immediate* Healing Rolls.

MS: 5 Healing Rolls CS: 10 Healing Rolls

Healing rolls are distributed among ailments/wounds at the invoker's discretion. Failures have no effect.

Habraen's Well III

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch Water **Duration:** Indefinite

Blesses RSI ounces of water. Ethereals or demons sprinkled with holy water must make an *immediate* 5d6 shock roll. Holy water is also needed for many invocations, especially those of healing.

Yselde's Sense III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch **Duration:** Indefinite

Subject is able to control any mundane animal for as long as touch is maintained.

Healing of Gorlan IV

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Touch **Duration:** Permanent

Regenerates within RSI-15 hours one eye, ear, hand, etc. Regeneration of a leg or major organ takes at least twice as long and requires twice as long to invoke.

Peoni's Aid IV

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** One Use

MS: Stops bloodloss and heals one (1) injury level from any designated wound touched by the invoker.

CS: Heals the designated wound completely in one day.

CF: Causes the designated wound to become *infected*.

Peoni's Mercy IV

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** N/A

Requires one mundane or ethereal creature in *Range* who would harm the subject to grant mercy. The creature departs immediately with CS, but may roll vs 3x WIL to resist with MS.

Sustenance of Maermal IV

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch **Duration:** 2 (MS); 6 (CS) days

Subject is unaffected by hunger and thirst for *Duration*. Any damage caused by malnutrition is cured. May not be performed on the same subject more than once per month.

Tirrala's Renewal IV

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer
Range: Touch **Duration:** Permanent

Cures an old affliction, such as a blind eye, deaf ear, crippled leg, etc. The afflicted area must be present in its entirety and still attached to the subject's body. If successful the affliction will disappear in RSI days (MS) or immediately (CS).

Descent from Valon V

Time: 15-RSI hours **Ritual:** Chant/Holy Water
Range: Touch **Duration:** Indefinite

Bring the recent dead back to life, although not to the prime of health. This is an extremely difficult ceremony, which burns a great deal of incense, and requires copious amounts of holy water. EML is reduced by the number of hours the victim has been dead at the *conclusion* of the ritual. The patient revives with any success. All mortal wounds and/or diseases are restored to a healing rate of H1 (MS) or H2 (CS.). The patient may still die and additional healing is advisable.

King of the Icy Wind,
Lord of the Perilous Quest,
Wielder of the Blooded Axe,
Master of Frosty Climes,
The Gray Slayer.

Sarajin is a god of battlelust, requiring fearlessness and bravado of his adherents. He loves the "sport" of war and takes great pleasure in watching and even participating in large battles. The only virtue universally admired by adherents of Sarajin is courage. He is the patron god of the Ivinians.

Sarajin is typically portrayed as a giant, yellow-haired, bearded warrior clad in furs and leather, who rides across the snowy wastes in his sled, Shalka. He bears Fakang, his great double-bladed axe, which is able to split a mountain or with a single blow.

THE EARLY CHURCH

The origins of the worship of Sarajin are obscure. Church organization is negligible, and there has always been a tendency to meld history and myth until they are one and the same. The most common tales recount a warmer land before Sarajin led the Ivinians to their present home. About all that can be concluded is that the worship of Sarajin has its roots in the ancient history of the Ivinian people, before they migrated to the northlands from mainland Lythia.

Bjarri Threehand

The "Saga of Bjarri Threehand", while being as richly embroidered as any Ivinian myth, seems to contain some truth regarding the establishment of the church. Bjarri was a skald (bard) who lived during the second or third century BT. While traveling in the dead of winter he was beset by wolves. A skilled and valiant warrior, Bjarri, held off his attackers "for three passages of the sun and moon". Finally, exhausted and weakened by his wounds, he collapsed before his final opponent, a great white wolf.

Bjarri awoke to find himself unhurt and overlooking a ferocious battle. He witnessed many courageous deeds as the conflict progressed, each warrior striving valiantly for supremacy. At this point Bjarri became aware that he had been joined by two armed women. They led him to a great mead hall where hundreds of men roistered and drank. On a dais sat a massive, burly warrior with golden hair, who beckoned the skald to a seat beside him. Bjarri was provided with the finest of meat and drink and listened to tale after tale of bravado and courage. Finally his host spoke, saying:

> *"Look long upon the best and boldest and take forth the tale of my house. Speak unto those of fierce heart who revel in the fullness of strength, and fear not the long night, that they may look unto me for reward in death as well as life."*

Bjarri pleaded to be allowed to remain in Talagaad, but Sarajin returned him to the lands of mortal men. From then until his death in battle at age 75, Bjarri spoke and sang of Sarajin, attracting numerous followers who spread the doctrine throughout the northlands. So attractive was the mythos to the northmen, that by the first century TR it was a universal and almost exclusive faith of Ivinians.

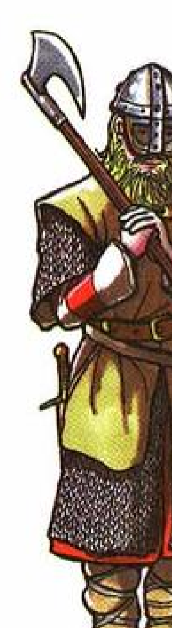
Geography

The *King of the Icy Wind* suits the northmen and their clime, and they suit him. Sarajin is worshipped almost exclusively by the Ivinians in both their homeland and scattered colonies. It is, by far, the dominant faith of Ivinia, Altland, Harbaal, Palithane, and Orbaal. Because the Ivinians have a wanderlust that has taken them to the far corners of the world, small pockets of Sarajinianism can be found almost anywhere, but rarely does the faith have much appeal outside those of Ivinian ancestry.

On Hârn, the worship of Sarajin is concentrated in Orbaal. The religion is far from popular with most Jarin, who closely identify it with their Ivinian oppressors. There are a few temple clanhouses in Rethem and Chybisa where Ivinians reside in some numbers.

Symbols & Regalia

Sarajin is commonly symbolized by *Fakang* his battleaxe, *Shalka* his sled, a pair of crossed handaxes, or one of his Pradeyalkri servants. Pious adherents of the King of the Icy Wind wear one or more representations of these symbols on their persons.



A Valhakar (clanhead) of a clerical clan. Clerics of Sarajin have no particular mode of dress and almost nothing in the way of formalized robes; most are warriors and dress accordingly. Around his neck he wears a silver pendant symbolic of Fakang, the great battleaxe of Sarajin.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Despite a lack of central authority, the worship of Sarajin is remarkably consistent in all places where the King of the Icy Winds holds sway. For most Ivinians, religion is a matter of everyday life, almost taken for granted. There is very little in the way of formal ritual. Sarajinians respect their myths and their clergy, but are not overly reverent. History and myth are intertwined in tales of heroes and gods, called eddas.

Although skalds are not generally clerics or members of clerical clans, they fill important roles in reinforcing the worship of Sarajin. Skalds memorize, recite and embellish the eddas. Some dwell within the houses of great lords, though most wander. They are highly respected guardians of an essentially oral tradition.

Talagaad

Sarajin dwells in *Talagaad*, his ice castle on Yashain. The souls of his adherents who die in battle are taken there where they may spend each day locked in combat. At dusk the fallen are revived and victors and vanquished orgy all night within the feasting halls of Talagaad. At dawn the battle is resumed. To a devout Sarajinian, this is paradise. Near Talagaad stands *Meflygur*, the tree of the blood of the slain, which grows a hundred crimson apples each night. It is said that mortals who eat the fruit are healed of wounds and gifted with immortality and youth.

The Avalir

The semi-divine children of Sarajin, the result of his liaisons with mortal women. Although many women claim to have been visited by Sarajin and given birth to his progeny, it is likely that there are less than a dozen Avalir. Two of these are *Idjar One Eye* (below) and *Skivaal the Mariner* (page 5).

Idjar One Eye

The son of Sarajin and a female skald, Idjar used magic to enter Talagaad before his time and was cursed by Sarajin for his impudence. He now dwells at Idjarheim, his lodge in Ivinia, with one eye that views Kethira and another that looks upon Yashain. Despite the patch that he moves from one eye to the other, this has driven him slightly mad. He seldom speaks of his curse and grows angry if questioned too closely on it. The Elkyris Bronwyne, Easlyn, Freana, and Ylina pity him and often visit his home.

The Ljarl

The Ljarl is the code of honor advocated by the followers of Sarajin. Its dominant virtues are courage, and loyalty to one's lord, clan, and family. Life and death are one; the manner of each is of utmost importance. The perfect life must be crowned by the perfect death, which is to die in heroic battle. The noblest achievement is to win eternal fame though deeds worthy of a skald's saga.

To devout Sarajinians, the Ljarl is law. The honor of one's house and family must be upheld through hospitality and generosity. It is a matter of pride that improper courses of action do not even occur to them. To behave dishonorably is unthinkable. The fact that in many situations there is only one honorable choice makes life simpler. The Ljarl is not lacking in subtlety, however. The tragedies of internecine strife figure prominently in northern myth, and Sarajinians are fond of such quandaries. Situations of honorable men forced to choose between dishonorable options are favorite subjects of folk tales.

Many Sarajinians live each day as if it were the last. Any opportunity for a drunken revel is seized, wealth is spent, and everything is done with extravagance. Clerics have found that trying to curb excess in these matters is unwise.

Berserkers

An extreme product of the Ljarlic code is the berserker. These fanatical warriors are able to work themselves into an inhuman frenzy in battle, often triggered by seeing their lord die in battle. Once vengeance has been exacted, most seek an honorable death in battle at the earliest opportunity.

Teachings of Clan Thoryn of Lokis

Where did the world come from?

In the days before time, Kelestia was once a maelstrom of chaos, born in an instant of strife. The first to waken were the First Gods, who were strong, and fought bravely over dominion of Kelestia. And they discovered that they had the power to create great things, and created the Lesser Gods to be their huscarls. The Lesser Gods in turn created beasts and man and unspeakable demons, all to serve them as they served the First Gods. Eventually, the First Gods perished, leaving the Lesser Gods and their sons to rule.

Each god now took a kingdom and Sarajin chose the rugged lands of Ivinia. There, he was forced to fight an outlandish army of demonic beings called the Pradeyalkri before he could take control of Ivinia. After lengthy conflict Sarajin subjugated, banished, or killed all who opposed him, including his father Skarakyldrik, his grandfather Uyessegryn, among those he fought was the lord of the Pradeyalkri called *Suerlji*, a horrific serpentine monster who resided atop Mount Ilbengaad. Sarajin and Suerlji met in a duel. After twelve days of battle, Suerlji weakened until, with a blow that "...caused all gods to gaze upon his might..." Sarajin hewed the serpent's head from its body.

Our Lord is the greatest of the remaining gods, and this cold, frosty land, and the cruel and merciless sea were created by him to harden us, to ensure that only the strongest and bravest would survive.

Sarajinian Funerals

Most Sarajinians believe they will not die until Sarajin needs them in Talagaad. This leads to a sense of fearlessness on the battlefield. It also means that Sarajinian funerals tend to be rowdy affairs as the company celebrates the promotion of a friend to Talagaad. Of course, it is inevitable to feel some sadness on the death of a son or brother, but showing this at a funeral is an invitation to ridicule.

Sarajinians bury or cremate their dead with a selection of their worldly goods, including horses and weapons. Wealthy Ivinians prefer burial in stone, a habit they acquired from the Khuzdul. To be buried or burned in a specially constructed warboat is the ultimate honor.

ORGANIZATION

Where worship of Sarajin is common, the religious needs of the community are met by freeclans whose clanhouses serve as temples. Most are loosely organized. Temple-clanhouses are founded by one who "hears the call". If the new clan prospers, then the "call" was clearly real. Sometimes, an overlarge clan will send some of its members to establish a new clanhouse. Whatever aid and wealth is sent with them, they will eventually become independent. The Valhakar of the clerical clan is effectively the high priest. He governs the temple and interprets the religious mysteries. Command of the mysteries of the Sarajinian priesthood is part of the clan's heritable property. It is shared among clanmembers and laity as deemed appropriate by the Valhakar.

Sarajinians are not particularly dogmatic, but theological disputes do arise from time to time. If one clan dislikes what another is preaching, it may wage a private temple war to resolve the issue. The debate may spread to include more temples, but disputes rarely grow to include more than a few clans.

Clans embarking on a viking expedition often hire a cleric to accompany them. He meets the religious needs of the party, and wields an axe with the rest of them, and his clan receives a share of the booty. Income also comes from those who seek blessings on their endeavors, their houses, or their families. Payment for religious services is common, and absolution from sin is frequently paid for in silver.

CENTRAL AUTHORITY

There is no pontiff or central authority in the Sarajinian religion. The closest equivalent is at Molima, the stronghold of Clan Beldesa, and the center of the Ivinian kingdom of Eldeskaal. Molima was founded in 235 TR by Djarni Beldesa and a dozen followers who felt that they were on a divine mission. They built a clanhouse on the shore of Lake Temis, overlooked by Mount Ilbengaad, the Holy Mountain of Sarajinian myth. There are now more than six thousand residents of the small religious kingdom. Devout worshippers of Sarajin try to make at least one pilgrimage to Molima in their lifetime. Clan Beldesa has never made any attempt to claim the dominance of the church, nor has it attempted to codify Sarajinian doctrine.

Kyriheim

The windswept island of Kyriheim, in western Ivae, is home to the Cult of the Elkyri and the Oracle of Lokis. Pious Sarajinians try to make a pilgrimage to Kyriheim sometime during their lives. Kyriheim lies within the tiny kingdom of Lokis. All pilgrims must stop first at Lokis, the seat of clan Thoryn since Harkor Thoryn proclaimed the kingdom in 316.

The Cult of the Elkyri is the only Sarajinian clerical order. The order maintains a temple on the island and is primarily devoted to preservation of the site. The island is deemed sacred because it is the site of several dozen graves of women who are believed to have become Elkyri after death. The priestesses of the order decide, with divine guidance, who may be buried on Kyriheim. The temple is the destination of many Sarajinian pilgrims who sustain the order through offerings. The temple is also home to the Oracle of Lokis, a foreteller of destiny of considerable accuracy. Neither the cult nor the oracle try to organize the church, but their influence is felt by the faithful everywhere.

What of the other gods?

Tell me the truth about...

Agrik, master of the V'hir, was once a great warrior, but has lost sight of his honor. While battle and bloodshed are noble endeavors, killing without purpose is cowardly. Nevertheless, the servants of the Lord of the Four Horsemen are quite skilled, and may be our allies at times.

Halea is not to be trusted. The wiles of the The Lady of Bargains have sent many a warrior to his grave and denied him the glory of death in battle. Take not her priestesses as warbrides, lest you see first hand the trouble that comes from a woman who thinks herself your equal.

Ilvir is not easily understood. The Craven Lord has little honor and is as unpredictable and dangerous as a wild animal. Have caution around him, and guard well against those who profess to follow him.

Larani is strong and good and pure of heart, She is a true Shieldmaiden. She and her soldiers should be treated with respect. Forgive their minor transgressions against the Ljarl, for their Goddess is sometimes blinded by her hatred of Agrik.

Morgath has no sense of honor or order. He and his servants are cowards, striking out from the dark at good and better men. They seek to subvert our ways of honor by foul murder. Show them no mercy.

Naveh is the Master of Deceit and the Master of Cowardice. He strikes only at night, and will not face his foes in open battle, as is their honorable due. Crush them wherever they are found, lest their cowardly ways poison the world.

Peoni is good and strong, but has no heart for that which must be done. Left to her, sewer vermin like Morgath and Naveh would despoil the All. Waste not your time trying to show them the true way, for they are stubborn in their ignorance.

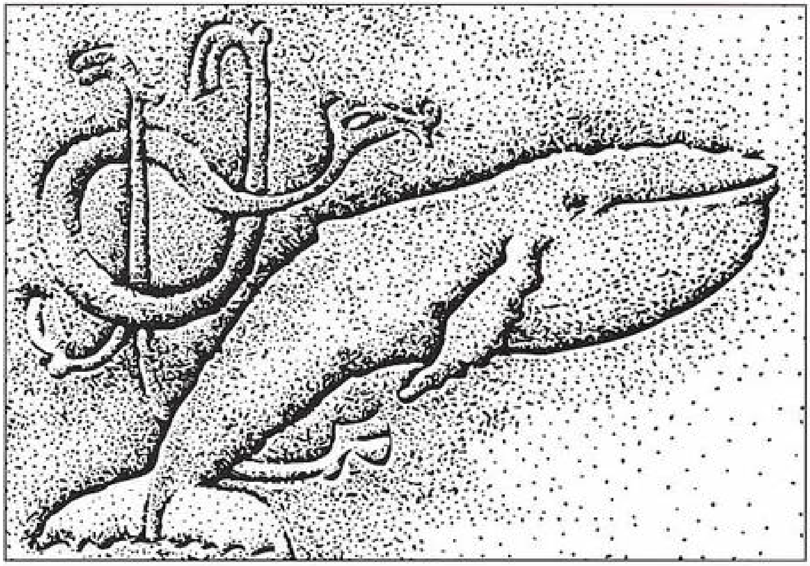
Save K'nor is the holder of the Law. He is to be treated with the respect given to any wyrdsmaan. He speaks only the truth, and his counsel is wise. Though unskilled at arms, and naive to the ways of the world, his intelligence and knowledge make him and his servants worthy allies.

Siem, the Lord of Dreams, while wise, is slow to act. He would rather talk ceaselessly and lose, than act decisively and win. Even the seizure of Bukrai by the Lord of Chaos failed to stir his will to fight. These are the deeds of a coward, and though he be wise, there is no honor in following his counsel.

The Pradeyalkyri

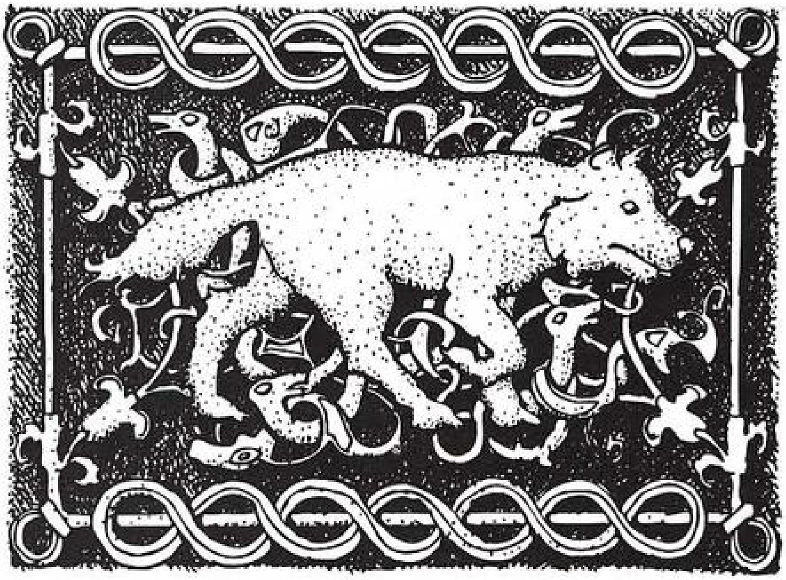
A few of the Pradeyalkyri aided Sarajin in his conquest. These were allowed to serve him after his triumph. The three most important are:

USNARL, Lord of Bears: the great white bear has the strength of twenty bears. Of all creatures, only Usnarl can defeat Sarajin in fair, unarmed combat. Despite his huge size, Usnarl is gentle. He has a profound empathy for helpless creatures and loathes despoilers of the forest.



NJEHU, Lord Of Whales: a great gray whale who spends most of his time sleeping on the sea bottom. He can cause terrible storms, but will also aid worthy travelers. Many tales tell of mariners running aground on Njehu's back, unaware of the nature of their landfall until he bears them to safety (or dives).

JARLAK, Carrion Lord: the lupine master of several dozen huge white wolves that guard Talagaad. When Sarajin summons folk, he often dispatches Jarlak to fetch them. The wolf lord swallows them whole and regurgitates them at the god's feet in perfect health.



Harkor Thoryn

Clan Thoryn was a religious clan from the island of Lokem in southern Ivinia. Harkor Thoryn was born in 290 into an atmosphere of piety and devotion. From an early age, it was apparent that he had the gift of second sight. He often spent days staring out to see, lost in reverie. Upon reaching his twelfth year, he started to be tormented by recurrent dreams of a circle of standing stones atop a windy isle. He also had frequent visions of the Elkyri Bronwyne. His relatives understood that he should make a pilgrimage to Kyriheim.

The pilgrimage ended tragically for Harkor's family. Only he survived a shipwreck when he was was washed ashore on Kyriheim and nursed back to health by the priestesses of the Cult. The orphaned Harkor was adopted by them. At age 18, the Oracle made the following prophesy:

A king on an eastward isle shall stand
His sacred realm in Sea-Lord's hand.
But when kings o'er Lokis rule abroad,
Shall Thoryns die by foreign sword.

In 316, Harkor went to neighboring Lokis to fulfill his destiny. By 350, a sizable and prosperous community had developed, and on Harkor's death in 364, Lokis was the largest settlement on the western coast of Ivinia. Harkor was entombed, according to his wishes, on the island of Kyriheim.

Calendar

The two most important festivals in the Sarajinian year both occur in the month of Kelen (Saraju to Ivinians). The first is the Ilbengaad Festival held from the tenth to the twelfth. Each year hundreds of pilgrims arrive at Molima in Ivinia, ascending Mount Ilbengaad on the tenth to celebrate amid the snows. Events consist of one day and night of feasting and drinking, one day of semi-ritual combat, and one day of prayer and recovery. There is a significant fatality rate among the celebrants, and those who die are deemed to go straight to Talagaad. Many believe that they are transported to the home of Sarajin during the battle or report seeing strange creatures during the combat. Although the Ilbengaad Festival is properly held only at the mountain, the three days are usually celebrated in some form by Sarajinians everywhere.

The second festival is called Bjarri's Feast, a celebration that occurs between the nineteenth and the twenty fifth of the month. This consists of a series of seven feasts during which eddas and tales are recited and sung in praise of Sarajin. These feasts are generally hosted by clerical clans with donations from their local congregations. They are as lavish as possible. Other features include ritual combats, some of which are fatal.

Prayers to the Elkyri

Most clans have a patron Elkyri, and often make small shrines dedicated to them. Travelers carry small blessed symbols bearing the appropriate runic symbol or other image. While the Elkyri are not worshipped, prayers are often offered to them. Instances where such prayers are offered are listed for each.

Alaryr most loves the sea. Ivinian mariners pray to her for favorable winds or calm seas in rough weather. She bears particular malice towards Ylina, believing that she failed to aid Alaryr's friend Jynaale, who was slain in 690 TR. The two will not aid the same individual within the span of a tenday.

Bronwyne is the eldest Elkyri and highly regarded as the dispenser of fate. She is fond of battle, and spends considerable time among mortal men. People pray to Bronwyne for assistance in and protection during battle. But she is very impatient and tends to ignore or punish those who call on her too often, Many pray to her before going viking to retrieve their souls should they die away from home.

Deanaal personifies the spirit of the Ljarl. She is the patron of young male warriors, and is called upon to witness oaths and promises. Such an oath is deemed one of the most inviolable of contracts. As one Ivinian curse has it: "Who breaks faith before Deanaal, let him melt off the earth like summer snow".

Easlyn is the gentle sister of Freana. She is fond of song and poetry and is revered by skalds, who often credit her for gifting them with "a hero's words".

Eynwif is guardian of Meflygur, the sacred tree of Talagaad. She seldom leaves the proximity of the tree, and thus is the Elkyri who travels least among mortals. She is a close friend of Bronwyne, and is the patron of healers. Those whom Bronwyne rejects in battle (survivors) call upon Eynwif for recovery. Her intercession has been credited with the miraculous regrowth of maimed limbs.

Freana is the eldest sister of Easlyn. She is fond of music, flowers, and young lovers. Sarajinian weddings end with prayer to her. Those seeking a mate or a sign of spring pray to Freana. Most Ivinian households have a small shrine to her, often adorned with fresh or dried flowers. Sometimes a gift to appease an angry spouse is left on the shrine. Accepting "Freana's Gift" signifies forgiveness.

Gresalyne is the patron of all women strong of heart and will. She is stern and righteous in wrath, kind and gentle when necessary, and quick to intercede on behalf of female warriors and wronged wives. Mothers pray to her for strength, and men pray to her to soften the heart of a stubborn woman.

Lynraal is the newest Elkyri, recruited upon her death in 702. She possesses a short, violent temper and loves nothing better than conflict. She and Bronwyne are bitter rivals, perhaps because of their similarities. Lynraal is sometimes considered a patron of luck, and her image is often found on viking ships.

Maarne is prayed to by those who farm. She loves the fruits of agriculture, and those who labor to produce them. Most Ivinian farmhouses contain a shrine to her. Those who pray for the health of livestock or to banish a crop blight, or simply for rest from their labors call upon Maarne.

Sendryl is a close friend of Freana and Easlyn, and often called upon by those wishing children. She is fond of crafts, particularly weaving. Farmers pray to her for fertile fields, fishermen pray to her for a plentiful catch, and craftsmen often sacrifice a particularly fine example of their craft to her when they pray for themselves, their families, or their communities.

Ylina is the most learned Elkyri, fond of those who seek knowledge, as well as poetry and song. She is the most solitary of the Elkyri. Those who need assistance to understand a holy mystery or the bizarre customs of foreigners pray to Ylina for insight. She will not aid one who has called upon Alaryr within the last tenday.

Skivaal the Mariner

One of the most celebrated of the Avalir is Skivaal the Mariner:

Did silent Shalka bear its lord,
Upon his lusty quest.
To mortal's lodge where might he be,
Unwilling maiden's guest.
And 'though she wept no mortal heard;
The god had bade them sleep.
When night had fled and morning come,
They woke and heard her weep.

A maiden's son, unwanted born,
Where cold white mountains drift,
Upon the restless, bitter seas,
That rage and drown and lift.
'Though tall and strong young Skivaal grew,
And fair of heart and face,
He won scant love among his kin,
Among the mortal race.

And came the day his mother passed,
She named to him his sire.
And Skivaal swore an oath to cast,
His father to the fire.
A seaman of great ken he was,
Who loved those northern seas.
And Skivaal made a sturdy boat,
Of old, enchanted trees.

And runes upon the bow he carved,
To guide by weirding way.
Far north to seek his father's hearth,
A year's span and a day.
And Sarajin, the slayer gray,
Perceived him on those seas.
And he was touched by quest so brave,
But could not grant surcease.

The god who loves the hero's heart,
But hates kinslayers all,
Would find some way to save himself,
Yet spare his son Skivaal.
For who shall pay the weirgild price,
When slain and kin be one.
What god his honor can conserve,
Who slays his mortal son?

For questing loved, for goal despised,
Resolved he would not kill,
His memories he stole from him,
But left him questing still.
And still he quests in northern seas,
Where gull and gray wave speaks.
But knows not who his father is,
So knows not what he seeks.

Prayer to Elkyri I

Time: 25–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant, Song, Prayer
Range: Self **Duration:** One Skill Use

A prayer to one specific Elkyri, identified in advance by the invoker, for assistance to perform a task. The task should be one in which the Elkyri has some interest.

MS: Elkyri hears and grants a +20 bonus to a related skill.

CS: Elkyri hears and grants a +50 bonus to a related skill.

CF: Elkyri is bothered, upset, or annoyed by the call. Request denied and retribution may (50% chance) be involved.

Usnarl's Hug II

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 20 (MS); 60 (CS) mins.

Increases subject's *Strength* for *Duration*. Any skills employing STR have a bonus of +5, or +10 if STR is used twice in skill base.

Jarlak's Lope III

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Increases subject's MOV by 2 (MS) and by 5 (CS) for *Duration*. This also gives a bonus to Dodge of +10 (MS) and +25 (CS). When *Duration* expires, or on a CF, the subject receives F3 Fatigue.

Njehu's Dive IV

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Subject can swim without Fatigue for *Duration*, and to stay underwater without breathing for up to RSI minutes.

Spirit of Shalka III

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer/Sled
Range: Touch **Duration:** 4 (MS); 12 (CS) hours.

Blesses a sled for *Duration*. The sled will move at double its normal speed. If the ritual is accompanied by the slaughter of one reindeer, the effect will last for twice as long. Draft animals (dogs or reindeer) are required.

Suerlji's Defense III

Time: 25–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 5 (MS); 15 (CS) mins.

Subject can fight without rest for *Duration*. During this time all Defense skills (Block, Counterstrike, Dodge) are +10. Subject acquires 5d6 Shock Roll when Duration expires.

Eynwif's Apple IV

Time: 35–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer/Red Apple
Range: Touch **Duration:** Indefinite

Inspired by the Elkyri who guards Meflygur, the Tree of Life that grows in Talagaad, this invocation blesses any red apple with healing properties. If a patient eats one apple, including its core and stem, all normal healing and infection rolls are +20 (MS) and +50 (CS) until all *current* injuries and diseases are healed. Green apples do not work, nor will any other fruit.

Idjar's Mantle IV

Time: 25–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer & Mantle
Range: Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) days.

Blesses a mantle, blanket,.or similar item, to keep its wearer immune to any cold temperature for *Duration*. The mantle will also, if wrapped around any frostbitten limb, thaw it painlessly and without injury in 1d6 hours.

Talagaad's Honor IV

Time: 25–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer/Gestures
Range: RML feet **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) rounds

An invocation to produce battle frenzy in a cleric's allies. Each friendly warrior within *Range* whose Will is *less* than the cleric's automatically goes *Berserk* for *Duration*. Those who have a Will that is equal or higher than the cleric's have the ***option*** to go Berserk. With **CF,** the effect extends to all warriors in Range, including enemy warriors. For Berserk effects, see Combat 18.

Fakang's Edge V

Time: 15–RSI minutes **Ritual:** Prayer/Holy Water.
Range: Touch Axe **Duration:** Indefinite

Improves the *Edge* impact of any *battleaxe* by +2. The ritual requires the blade to be heated to a glowing red and then plunged into a vat of ice cold Holy Water.

Njehu's Wind V

Time: 15–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI ships **Duration:** 4 (MS); 12 (CS) hours

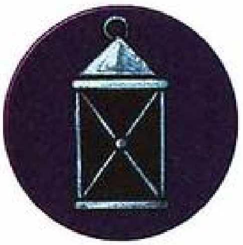
Fills the sails of RSI longships, warboats, or other vessels with sufficient wind to power the vessels at their maximum speed for *Duration*. When calm, the wind can blow from any direction, otherwise it blows in its present direction. The wind is chilled and air temperature drops to freezing.

Njehu's Stir V

Time: 35–RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant/Salt Water
Range: RML feet **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) hours

Cleric stirs a pail of *salt* water while chanting. When dumped into the sea, a maelstrom with a radius of RML feet develops in one minute and lasts for *Duration*. The maelstrom will suck down any swimmer caught in its current, and the pilot of any vessel nearby must roll vs *Piloting*, to avoid the same fate.

SAVE K'NOR 1



Sage of the Gods,
Lord of Puzzles, Conundrums, and Mazes,
Lord of Jesters,
Mixer of Potions,
Knower of Many Things,
Keeper of the Var-Hyvrak,
The Lost Guide.

Save-K'nor is most commonly depicted as the Lost Guide, an aged sage bearing Uhla, the lantern that gives no light. He is symbolic of the interminable nature of the quest for knowledge and the futility of the search for absolute truth. His other aspects include Redira the whimsical and sometimes musical jester, and Omono, the beggar who seeks enlightenment, but receives only common alms.

Theological Mission

The clergy of the Church of Save-K'nor gather knowledge, be it empirical, experimental, conjectural, practical, or theoretical. Only by examining the intricacies of the workings of the universe can enlightenment be gained, and only those capable of such understanding are worthy to aid Save-K'nor in the administration of the Concordat. But knowledge is dangerous, and there are those who would abuse it. The church bears the heavy burden of ensuring that knowledge is not disseminated too freely, and see to it that only those with the proper determination, discipline, and self-control gain access to higher learnings.

Social Mission

The Church of Save-K'nor has three clerical orders, each with a distinct social objective:

Order of Hyn-Aelori members are frequently consulted as experts and as tutors on a wide variety of topics. Their specialized talents command high prices.

Order of Rydequelyn monitors current affairs and brings subtle social pressures to bear against dangerous ideas and trends. Their occupations as jugglers, minstrels, and actors, camouflage this mission. In a largely illiterate society, entertainers shape the attitudes of the populace through parable and song.

Order of the Shea-al-Aecor serves as the guiding hand, making informed decisions based on information and knowledge gathered by the Hyn Aelori and the Rydequelyn. Their mission is to the church first, then to secular governments.

The Ke'lha-Hy-Var-Hyvrak

Save-K'nor is the arbiter of the *Ke'lha-Hy-Var-Hyvrak*, the Concordat of the Illimitable Tome, concluded to stave off the chaos that came from the unfettered actions of the gods and the unbridled sharing of lore. The terms of the Concordat were that "all knowledge" was gathered and hidden in the Illimitable Tome, where it would be safe from misuse. The seal on knowledge is not absolute. Those who can acquire knowledge by their own efforts are judged fit to know it.

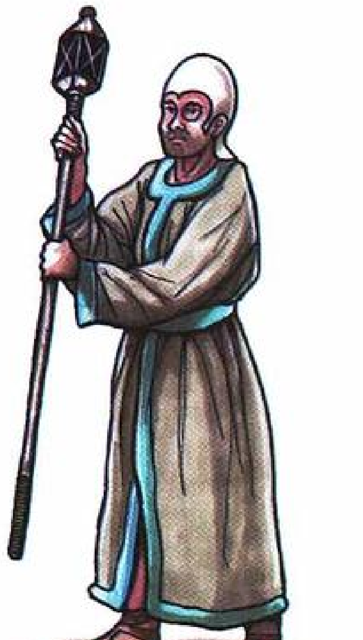
The Concordat establishes limitations on the ways in which the deities can compete for dominance, and creates a set of restrictions that apply to divine intervention in the affairs of mortals.

The Archival Court

The Concordat gives Save-K'nor a special position in the affairs of the gods. He is the arbiter of the Concordat, although it is likely that not even he understands the entire Tome. It is in the interest of all the gods that the Concordat be maintained, but the affairs of the divine are complex. It is not always apparent which course of action or inaction has the best chance of preserving the peace. Hence, Save-K'nor is the arbiter of disputes. His rulings are generally supported by a majority of the gods.

Symbols & Regalia

The numbers four, five and especially six have significance for K'norians. The practice of tattooing priests with a hexagon is one manifestation of the church's attraction to this mystical number. Uhla the black lantern is a prominent symbol; a replica is borne by all priests who hold church office. Complex spiral designs sometimes figure in the regalia of all three orders. Officers of the Hyn-Aelori may carry a short rod carved in the shape of a furled scroll.



A Serinti (Keeper of the Holy Lore) of the order of the Shea-al-Aecor. He holds a staff with a replica of Uhla, the black lantern, symbolic of his administrative office. Around his left eye he bears the hexagonal tattoo which he received after graduating from the ranks of the Manidar (acolytes) to the Haliki (priesthood). His robes are trimmed with blue, signifying that he is also a Rowanti (loremaster).

THE EARLY CHURCH

Eilar of Ironoth

Eilar of Ironoth, known as *The Guide of Vision*, is revered as the founder of the church. He had an unhappy childhood, being solitary and studious by nature, while his parents were hard-working farmers with no time for abstraction. Eilar ran away from home at sixteen. A self-imposed exile in the harsh Azeryani Drylands allowed him to live as a hermit. Eilar's greatest trial came when, delirious from thirst, he gazed at the sun. Rain came to save his life, but his eyes never saw again.

Eilar looked upon his trials as a kind of tempering. He learned to function with his other senses and blindness helped him perceive things others couldn't. After nine years in the wilderness, he had a vision of his mission. It is believed that during this time he was visited by each of the Althar in turn, who inspired him to found the church.

The purpose of the church was to mirror the function of Save-K'nor and his court on Kethira. They would gather knowledge and hide what was dangerous.

Daemar, Kithrond and Arin

Eilar summoned three companions of his youth, Daemar, Kithrond, and Arin, revealing to each a portion of his vision, and asking for their faith. They became disciples, and lived with him for four years in the wilderness. After they had learned all he would teach, he gave each a tome, and spoke to the three together:

> *"Thou knowst that ignorance is the father of contempt. He that understands not, loves not, but he who comprehends is beloved of the Sage. Learn that which is worthy; respect shall be thine. From knowledge shall thou tune thy very being, the sum of that which thou knowst, worthy of the Inscribed chambers. Trust and fear truth as thou would the Sage himself. The deepest secrets are terrible and are not revealed to the unchosen. Know the limits within thy self, for 'though they are of thy own design, they are real. Beware the temptations of excess and sloth for they are the stealers of thy wit. He who forgets his creed shall lose his wisdom, and only the stars will remember what once was."*

Then Eilar lay down, his heart stopped, and he died. Daemar, Kithrond and Arin realized that the contents of their tomes differed greatly. Their paths were to diverge. Each was to perform a different task. Each founded an order with its own purpose, but the unity of the church was preserved.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Ablution

Adherents begin each day with a ritual ablution designed to "wipe clean the slate for the day to write upon new mysteries". The common ablution consists of anointing with blessed water six points of the body, the forehead, each eyelid, the mouth, throat and heart. The holy water is allowed to dry as the supplicant meditates. In the temple, the Seren preaches a "lesson", some philosophical observations on mathematics, ethics, metaphysics, or some parable or story designed to aid the congregation in daily life.

K'norians own personal ablution bowls. These are used to carry water to the priests for blessing, and to convey the water after it is blessed. The most common designs are the cube and the hexagon, but this is mostly a matter of personal taste and wealth. All ablution bowls can be sealed. Boys of K'norian families are presented with personal bowls on their eleventh birthdays. The church blesses each bowl made and collects a tax called "pure pence" whenever one is sold.

Seren Rituals

Rituals of worship in the church of the Sage of Heaven are succinct and infrequent. The low ceremony is called the Seren, led by a committee appointed by the Serinti (Keeper of the Holy Lore). The Seren committee consists of one Loremaster, two priests, and three acolytes. Seren rituals are open to anyone.

Inor Teth

The legendary residence of Save-K'nor is called Inor Teth. It commonly believed that Inor Teth lies on neutral ground on Yashain. The walls of the structure are inscribed with the knowledge of all men. Inor Teth is called the Penultimate Maze; the ultimate maze being the universe itself.

The Var-Hyvrak

Save-K'nor's greatest treasure is the Var-Hyvrak, the Illimitable Tome, in which all mortal and divine knowledge is kept. The tome's location is ambiguous. Some hold it is hidden deep within Inor Teth. Others believe it is located "between worlds" because no single world can contain it. A few say it is contained within the mind of the deity himself, and is therefore merely a symbol of the great knowledge of Save-K'nor. All agree the Var-Hyvrak is well hidden and beyond the comprehension of mere mortals.

THE ORDERS

The three orders of the church have always played different roles. These roles are the same throughout western Lythia.

HYN-AELORI, the Sage of Heaven

The Hyn-Aelori is the largest order. They are the guardians of some of the greatest literary collections of the known world. They are, however, very conservative. Their function is to collect and preserve knowledge, not to share it with the populace at large, although a few paying lay-students are educated within temples of the Hyn-Aelori.

RYDEQUELYN, the Fool

In most regions, the Rydequelyn is the most prominent order, although they are only the second largest. The order operates largely within guidelines set by the Shea-al-Aecor to destroy or confuse dangerous information. Members tend to be artistic. Many jesters ascribe to this order, which is known for its elaborate (but anonymous) practical jokes. The Rydequelyn tends to be unpopular among the ruling classes.

SHEA-AL-AECOR, the Lost Guide.

The senior order contains the most intelligent and knowledgeable members. The Shea-al-Aecor sets overall policy for the church, and uses its accumulated wisdom covertly for the betterment of human society, as they define it. Lay and priestly members are employed in the governments of several states especially Melderyn, Emelrene, and the Azeryan Empire. Members of noble families throughout Lythia ascribe to this order.

The Velere

Monthly low mass, held by the Seren on the 6th of each month, and open to any adherent. The mass is used to sing the praises of the deity and to invoke his guidance and aid. The ceremony lasts about an hour, and is held half an hour after dusk.

The Keserene

Annual lay mass, held on the sixth of Savor. This is a special celebration of the acts of the saints. Pious K'norians fast for at least two days before the ritual, and arrive at the temple at noon to begin six hours of silent meditation. Following the silence, the Serinti recites the metaphysical background of the church and the history of the deity and his semi-divine servants, followed by the acts of the mortal founders of the church. The congregation punctuates the tale with hymns. The ceremony lasts past midnight.

The Hasern

These activities are more like study sessions than religious ceremonies. The congregation gathers in the hall of ritual of the temple for a lecture by one of the Rowanti. The lecture is preceded by a prayer and followed by a seminar. The object is a broadening of knowledge. About half the Hasern sessions are open to the laity; it depends on the subject. Most Hasern are held in the evenings and last 2-4 hours.

The Inbarin

The high rituals of the church are open only to the priesthood. They are conducted by the Serinti himself. These are invocations of the deity and sincere requests for guidance. Although the priests gather together in the hall of ritual and chant the Prayer of Forthcoming in chorus, each meditates on his own in an all night vigil before the altar. Inbarin are held following the monthly lay masses.

ORGANIZATION

The temple is the basic unit of the church. Temples are designated as belonging to one or more of the three orders. Single order temples are most common, especially those of the Hyn-Aelori which tend to be the largest. The second most common temples belong to the Rydequelyn, and the rarest are those of the Shea-al-Aecor. The temples of the Hyn-Aelori display aspects of a university, albeit one that is not open to the public. Only the Hyn-Aelori accept acolytes. Some people look upon the church as a haven for intellectuals and estranged scholars; this view has an element of truth.

Indoctrination

Those who would join the priesthood must make a contribution of some kind to a temple of the Hyn-Aelori, preferably an ancient or original treatise which they stand ready to explain or defend against the temple experts. Those who do not meet high standards of wisdom and intelligence are not considered worthy adherents.

Probationary acolytes (and a few paying students) are given a broad education in philosophy and theology, as well as several other arts and lores. They undergo a rigorous examination of their intelligence and learning for one year. If their progress is satisfactory, they may remain.

What of the other gods?

Tell me the truth about...

Agrik possesses strength, but is a tiny-minded brute. He has violated the Concordat and may yet, one day, cast it aside. Our ever patient Sage seeks to enlighten Agrik and his minions, but fears the task hopeless, and so he works also to counter their threat to peace.

Halea is selfish and shallow, and cares only for herself and her pleasures. She and her followers are happy to acquire knowledge that will be of use to them personally, but they care not for humanity. Short-sighted, they never consider the ramifications of their actions or how pleasures in the present may lead to misfortunes in the future.

Ilvir is a puzzle. He pursues his strange arts with the good intention of seeking knowledge, but then releases his monstrous children into the world without concern for their fate. His followers are equally strange for they care more for Ilvir's creations than Ilvir does.

Larani the Shieldmaiden is a worthy ally. Like our Lord, she seeks to protect Kelestia against those who seek its destruction. Her methods are not ours, for Larani and her followers lack wisdom and foresight, but she and her followers become wiser with our counsel.

Morgath is the herald of our fate if we are not zealous in our work. He is far more dangerous than Agrik, for he seeks not simple domination,.but the negation of all. He is mad for this would include his own obliteration as well. This troubles him naught because he has already been destroyed by Bukrai.

Naveh is convinced that the Concordat will one day break down and that Kelestia will be destroyed. He is cunning, disciplined, ruthless, unpredictable, and cruel, caring for nothing save himself and a handful of paranoid servants. He is an implacable foe who listens only to the reason of the sword.

Peoni is our surest ally. It was she who first proposed the Concordat. Loving, nurturing, she cares for all, and expends her strength to preserve all from the forces of chaos. Her way is not the way of the mind, but of the heart. This way is not sufficient to protect mankind.

Sarajin lacks wisdom 'though he possesses a noble heart. He and his followers are overly fond of violence for they believe a Great Struggle for the future of Kelestia will take place and only their warlike ways will save the world from the forces of destruction. Reason has always been sharper than the sword.

Siem is the oldest and wisest of gods. It was he who was first asked to keep the Var-Hyvrak. Siem deferred to the greater wisdom of our Lord, and then withdrew from the affairs of gods and mortals altogether. One should be respectful of Siem and his followers for they value knowledge and existence. That they take little active interest in this world is cause for sadness, but not for scorn.

CENTRAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITY

THE RION ISHAR (Pontiff)

The chief mortal priest of Save-K'nor is traditionally the Grandmaster of the Shea-al-Aecor. The pontifical seat is the city of Berema in Emelrene, but most of the administrative functions are conducted at the temple complex of Ishranor, some five leagues outside the town. The pontiff appoints officers to fill vacant regional posts. The pontiff is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the temple complex, and for various ritual functions. In many ways, this is a ceremonial office.

THE ISHRANOR ENCLAVE

The high council of the church of Save-K'nor is called the Enclave and consists of the Primates (or their deputies), the Grandmasters of all three orders, and up to six others appointed by the pontiff. All members are Rowanti. The council has the right to set policy and the power to elect or dismiss any officer of the church, including the pontiff.

THE DEOR ISHAR (Primate)

The church of Save-K'nor divides the known world into several primacies. Each primacy is administered by an appointed primate who is a senior member of the Shea-al-Aecor, who is appointed by the pontiff.

The Deor Ishar selects Father Visitors for each of the temples within his primacy. The primate is himself a member of the Enclave, and appoints one or more deputies to represent him; if he is at Ishranor, his deputy takes charge of the province. If the primate is in his territory, as most do, his deputy resides at Ishranor.

TEMPLE ADMINISTRATION

THE TRYAHLAR (Council of Electors)

The six most senior Rowanti form a council, called the Tryahlar, whose function is to elect priests to fill administrative offices. The Tryahlar meets whenever an administrative position falls vacant. It also meets once a year to review the performances of officers.

THE IBARTI (High Deacon)

The temple's chief administrator. The Ibarti takes charge of general policy, especially external relations. He serves for up to six years then steps aside, although in rare cases Ibarti have been elected for additional terms.

THE SERINTI (Keeper of the Holy Lore)

This officer cares for the sacred artifacts and scriptures. A Serinti is expert on matters of myth, ritual and theology and is usually familiar with the practices of other churches. The Serinti is called upon to preside over most temple rituals, and examines acolytes on matters of theology and sacred lore. Unlike most administrative positions, that of the Serinti is usually filled by one of the Rowanti.

THE DERONTI (Archivist)

The officer responsible for care, preservation and, copying of non-sacred temple archives. He also helps direct acolytes in their studies. The Deronti is expected to be familiar with the contents of the library. Most are also aware of the contents of other temple and secular archives. The Deronti examines acolytes on matters of knowledge.

THE FALORIN (Counselor)

The acolytes' advocate. This is usually a fairly junior priest. His task is to counsel and assist students with their projects. If they encounter difficulties with sacred or secular authorities, he may be called upon to represent them. In large temples, the responsibilities may be shared between several Falorin. In some temples, the Falorin is elected by the acolytes.

Intellectual Background

Original thinking is encouraged by church dogma. Many independent philosophers ascribe to K'norianism, and he is the favored deity of bards, heralds, jesters, mages, and scholars. Many priests, and members of the laity, hold high political office.

Communications

The church of Save-K'nor has perhaps the finest communications network in the known world. Acolytes and priests are constantly bearing messages back and forth. In addition, high ranking officials of the church are known to possess certain esoteric artifacts able to transmit words and thoughts over great distances. These are called the *Pelenra* and may be of Earthmaster origin.

The church employs an elaborate system of codes and ciphers. Cryptography is considered a field of academic study equal to geography and mathematics. Codes are changed at irregular intervals and temples periodically sell systems to outside authorities.

The church frequently hire the services of outsiders as information gathering agents. Payment for such services is 3d/day of which 2d is paid in advance, and an oath of loyalty is demanded for this employment.

Burial Customs

There are two main methods acceptable to the followers of Save-k'nor. One is to be cremated, the other is to be buried in such a manner as to create a puzzle or dilemma. It is their custom to leave a riddle or puzzle for others to solve engraved on their tomb or memorial (which is normally contained by the temple). Solving the riddle may find the mortal remains, or perhaps some treasure. Finding the treasure obliges the finder to mention the deceased in his own "death-riddle".

THE ALTHAR

The chief servants of Save-K'nor are the nine Judges of the High Archive.

Althea (The Truthsayer)

Althea is only entity other than Save-K'nor who is able to use Uhla. When the unseen light of Uhla is shed by Althea or the deity, all secrets are exposed.

Argenon (The High Riddler)

The Lord of Enigmas, Argenon is the most intelligent of the Althar, a creator and solver of riddles. Argenon fetches interesting puzzles from the mortal plane for his master's amusement. He also creates puzzles, and answers difficult questions for the other Althar. Argenon has fathered several demi-divine children. The Riddlemaster of Anrist Point may be one.

THE OLUNAR (Seneschal)

The officer responsible for the day-to-day running of the temple. He organizes meals, cleaning and laundry, drawing upon the acolytes as necessary. This is not a particularly popular position.

THE MAECOR (Father Visitor)

Found only in temples of the Hyn-Aelori and Rydequelyn, the Maecor is appointed by the primate to advise the Council of Electors and administrative officers. His advice is given serious consideration for two reasons. First, he is the direct representative of the Primate and Pontiff. Second, he has the power to dismiss any officer or to suspend the authority of the Council to govern the temple on an interim basis. Such unilateral actions are rarely taken. The Maecor also examines the acolytes and priests with a view to transferring them to other orders. Exceptional individuals may be examined or transferred at any time.

THE ROWANTI (Loremasters)

Each temple has several Rowanti. These are the venerated masters of the temple and have great leeway in their activities. They are not administrative officers. The Rowanti have mastered at least one field of learning. The only official functions of the Rowanti are to further study their subject(s), to teach, and to examine, accept or reject the labors of reverence of the Haliki. The Council of Electors is comprised of the six most senior Rowanti; most administrative positions are held by ordinary priests.

THE HALIKI (Priests/Priestesses)

The Haliki organize their own educations. They may, within reasonable limits, study freely in the temple archives. They usually attend lectures and seminars given by the Loremasters in their own and sometimes other temples.

Priests are given various administrative functions. Each will normally be assigned as mentor to one or more acolytes. They may be called upon to assist one of the masters in a project, serve as messengers, copy or translate difficult manuscripts, and so on. If they require advice they may call upon the Rowanti or on the Falorin. If they require assistance, they may use their acolytes. They may also be called upon to direct rituals.

The Labors of Reverence

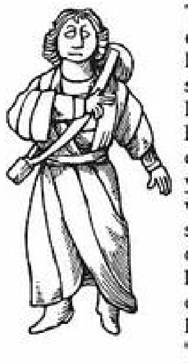
At various times, usually at least once yearly, Haliki submit "Labors of Reverence" to the Loremasters. These are mostly intellectual works (which must be defended at need) but quests to gather/recover lost artifacts or works, translations of old/difficult manuscripts, and works of art (particularly in the Rydequelyn) may also be accepted. When thirty six labors have been accepted by the masters (some labors may be counted as several) the Haliki is elevated to the rank of Rowanti.

THE MANIDAR (Acolytes)

The Manidar perform menial functions and are expected to educate themselves by attending lectures and seminars held by temple experts. At least once yearly they must submit themselves to the masters for examination on a topic of their choice, and all acolytes are expected to master the rudiments of church doctrine and temple philosophy. Once they have passed examinations on six separate subjects, and have also demonstrated literacy in at least two scripts and mastery of at least two foreign languages, they graduate into the Haliki. As a mark of rank, newly graduated Haliki receive a hexagonal tattoo; in most regions it is placed around the left eye.

If one of the Manidar completes all six examinations in three years, he is examined by the Father Visitor (see below). Such special individuals are invariably transferred to the Rydequelyn or the Shea-al-Aecor where they begin *again* as acolytes. Acolytes are assigned advisors, usually from the Haliki.

Bronduschithrin (The Lord of Lies)



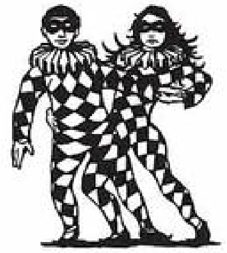
Known also as the Taleweaver, Brondus has charge of fiction and legends. His repertoire of stories is said to be limitless, and his style, hypnotic. Brondus is commonly portrayed as a young, dashing wanderer with a lute slung over his shoulder. He role is hiding dangerous knowledge, hence his name the Lord of Lies. It is said of Bronduschithrin that he, "never speaks true where a lie would do".

Deocala, Desaria and Detasia (The Searchers)

These three are dedicated to the gathering of knowledge in all its forms. Their search carries them throughout Kelestia as they seek out knowledge to be recorded upon the walls of Inor Teth. Portrayed as women of gentle bearing and soft beauty, the trio come often into contact with mortal folk and are the subject of several tales and songs.

Thonahexus (Herald of Inor Teth)

Thonahexus sits in a high throne atop Inor Teth watching in all directions. His task is dealing with visitors. It is said that he knows every living thing by sight. Those of importance are announced to the deity. Lesser beings are permitted to enter and peruse the upper levels if they can answer a riddle which may be posed by Thonahexus or Argenon.



Yerit and Ilyasha (The Teachers)

A male-female team, these two Althar are the patrons of the performing arts. Portrayed either as jesters or thespians, Yerit and Ilyasha are the quintessential performers. Dramatists pray to them for luck. Their function is obscure. Most believe that they are responsible for non-intellectual knowledge, the gathering of emotion.

The Vaenya
Scribes of the High Archive

Inor Teth is the heaven of the mortal adherents of Save-K'nor. Those who serve the god well in life are elevated to the Vaenya after death. The Vaenya build and inscribe the walls of Inor Teth, carry messages, and serve the Althar.

SAVE K'NOR 6

Library of the Hyn-Aelori II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: One object **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes.

Protects a book, scroll, or other object with recorded information from discovery. Only a dedicated search will have any chance (roll vs Awareness) of finding the object.

Light of Uhla II

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Cleric can see in the dark as well as by lamplight. May reveal, hidden objects at GM discretion.

Wisdom of the Shea-al-Aecor II

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Silent Prayer
Range: Self **Duration:** Instantaneous

Gives the priest insight into the proper course of action in a moral quandary. GM may reveal information in any appropriate way, with CS giving more substantial knowledge.

Althea's Lamp III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Blesses a lamp with some of the attributes of *Uhla.* Those who are questioned in the light of Althea's Lamp *(Range)* must make an WIL x3 check to avoid telling the truth. On a CS result, the questioned person cannot remain silent.

Argenon's Riddle III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Prayer/Spoken Riddle
Range: 1 Listener **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) mins.

Poses a riddle that the listener must answer or make a successful WIL x3 check to ignore. Those puzzled by the riddle can perform no other action that requires concentration, and suffer a special penalty to all skills of −10 for *Duration.* Riddle must be in a language known by listener and involve a familiar subject. The priest must know the answer.

Brondushithrin's Lie III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: N/A **Duration:** Indefinite

Protects one specific piece of information by making it seem an obvious lie to whoever hears it.

Daemar's Discipline III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 8 (MS); 24 (CS) days

Increases subject's WIL by +2 (MS) or +6 (CS) for *Duration.*

Kithrond's Memory III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self **Duration:** 1 day

Improves the chance of learning an Invocation from a written work read during *Duration.* Work has a scripture bonus +10.

Redira's Ease III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 8 (MS); 24 (CS) days

Enables the subject (even the most bookish scholar) to pass among the wealthy and sophisticated with ease and charm for *Duration.* Does not affect clothing.

Silence of Uhla III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Creates a sphere centered on the invoker with a radius of RSI hexes for *Duration.* No sound is heard inside the zone, nor can sound emanate from the zone.

Voice of the Rydequelyn III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 5 (MS); 15 (CS) minutes

Distorts a speaker's voice, rendering it squeaky and stuttering. All listeners within *Range* are likely to laugh and/or ignore the oration.

Yerit and Ilyasha's Game III

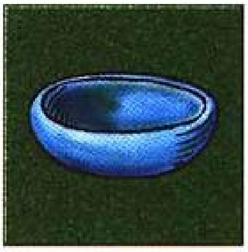
Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Silent Prayer & Gesture
Range: RSI hexes **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) seconds.

Distracts anyone within *Range* although nothing actually happens. Anyone within *Range* must roll vs WIL x3 (MS) or WIL x1 (CS) or is stunned for 10 (MS) or 30 (CS) seconds.

Scribe of Inor Teth IV

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Permanently records spoken information onto a scroll.



Master of the Lords of Dream,
Bringer of Meritorious Dreams and Blessed Forgetfulness,
Lord of the Starlit and Thrice-blessed Realm,
King of the Uttermost West,
Master of the Sundered Ones in Exile,
Spirit of the Mist,
Never-changing Lord of the Azure Bowl.

The Lord of the Starlit Realm most often appears as an elven lord garbed in a mantle of flowing green and silver, with a wreath of stars upon his head. His face and body bear no clue of age, but his eyes project wisdom, and his aura projects confused feelings of strength and longing. Siem is surrounded by an air of sadness, of "otherwhereness".

The King of the Uttermost West is the eldest of the lesser gods, and probably the wisest. Siem is patient above all others. Siem was first offered, but refused, the guardianship of the Illimitable Tome, nominating Save-K'nor in his stead.

Siem is known for his sending of pleasant and oracular dreams, and for the gift of forgetfulness, the salve of unpleasant memories. His actions are subtle, effective, more apt to confuse than harm.

Siemist Belief

While, there is no true church of Siem, there is a body of beliefs common to worshippers of Siem defining acts which are considered reverent and actions which are abhorrent. Most worshippers of Siem delve into Natural Mysteries, ancient secrets about the ordering of life, that extend back to the time Siem resided on Kethira. Once these mysteries are mastered, the adherent may act to protect the natural order from that which would destroy it. It is considered improper to act in ignorance. The sincere adherent is a moral entity, compassionate, trustworthy, and one who strives towards greater wisdom and patience. Siem is forgiving; those who fail are not condemned, only those who do not try.

Sindarin Belief

Most Sindarin accept that Kethira is primarily for mankind. Though, Siem preserves parts of it for a short time (in Sindarin terms), the destruction of nature by man is inevitable and lasting peace is possible only in the Blessed Realm. Elsewhere the elves are in the twilight of their days. The elves pray to Sweldre, Siem's divine servant.

Khuzan Belief

The Khuzdul tend to separate religion from everyday life. They pray to the demigod Sereniel, Siem's servant, but rarely ask favor of him. Khuzan religion is a personal matter. Dwarves tend to worship alone rather than meeting for mass. The basic purpose is to achieve unity with nature.

History of the Religion

The worship of Siem was spread to Kethira and Yashain by the Sindarin. It originated on Midgaad. For as long as they have been aware, the Sindarin have honored Siem, whom they call the "One". Their racial origin is connected with the god; it is he who made them what they have come to be, creatures able to survive the confusion of the eons before and since the Concordat, able to take joy from the universe as it is, able to survive the presence of more dynamic races such as man. The elves believe that before the intervention of Siem, they were a mean and ugly folk, preoccupied with selfish and worldly matters, ignorant of their own nature and of the beauty that exists in all things. Siem is synonymous with the salvation of the Sindarin (and the Khuzdul) from the terrors of ignorance. As is attested by an early verse from Midgaad:

Geography

Worship of Siem is primarily concentrated in the kingdoms of Evael and Azadmere on Hârn. There are adherents in the Khuzdul realm of Kuzjera in Ivinia, and in other dwarven cities as well. Human worshippers are few and most of them reside on Hârn.

Symbols and Regalia

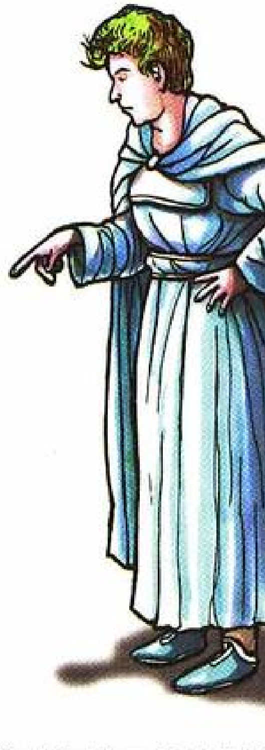
Green and silver and browns and grays, colors that enable their wearer to blend into the forest are common. Blue has special significance. Many adherents don an azure scarf, hood or gown when at meditation. Silver, blue and green jewelry, and wreaths of stars or leaves are also symbols of piety.

The Azure Bowl

A mystical symbol of Siem. The bowl is connected with "the making, the holding, and the very spilling forth of the stars." Legend recounts that the Azure Bowl, when filled with clear water, brings visions that portend the future for the gazer. While no mortal has ever seen the original, many forgeries exist, a few having great powers of their own.

Calendar

The 15th, night of the full moon, is known as the Night of High Perspective. The 30th, night of the new moon, is known as the Night of Silent Renewal. The 15th of Azura is the Night of Golden Twilight, the equivalent of an annual high mass.



An Inthiar (priest) dressed in the light blue robes of the celebration of the Night of High Perspective. The robes worn on the Night of Silent Renewal are darker blue. There is little formal regalia in the church of Siem.

For that which has toppled to fall in dark waters,
The cry of the evils which savage the land,
A Father to save all the sons and the daughters,
Eternity grasped in His bowl by His hand.

Warming the tempest with justice and trusting,
That darkness retreat from the word that is true.
Gone is the hate, gone the slaughter and lusting,
Beyond lies a world of clear rhythm and hue.

This song tells of the revelation of Siem, his attempt to secure the elves against the evils arising about them, and hints at his attempt to lead the Sindarin to the Blessed Realm. Not all of them followed. Some were lost along the way, choosing to fight the evil in other worlds rather than flee it.

The Human Experience

Humans began worshipping Siem when the Jarin first came to the Sindarin realm of Hârn. A group of Jarin scholars journeyed to King Daelda around 1300BT and sought permission to study the arts of his people. Because Sindarin religion is hard to separate from their way of life, the scholars began to study and then worship Siem. Jarin humans often perceived the Sindarin as demigods.

Few humans worship Siem outside the Jarin of northern Hârn, the wilderness, or the settlements of the elder peoples. There are also a few pilots, seamen, astrologers and scholars who follow the Lord of the Azure Bowl. Humans have added an extremely loose organizational structure to the church of Siem, somewhat to the amused tolerance of the Sindarin and Khuzdul. Human "priests" are called Inthiar. These are enlightened holy men, many of whom dwell in the wilderness to reach a deeper understanding of Siem. While there are sometimes deemed to be ranks of Inthiar, this is a reflection of the "state of grace" achieved, than administrative rank.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

In the conventional sense, there is no church of Siem. Each adherent forges his own personal relationship with the deity, without the necessity of recourse to special holy men. There are no priests among the Sindarin, and no formal institutions of worship. Khuzan priests do exist but their roles are teaching and counseling.

There is only one important ritual gathering. It occurs at a Holy Grove or other consecrated place. Ideally, a simple cairn will be constructed and covered with a soft cloth. Two candles are placed on the cloth and between them is a bowl (preferably blue) filled with water. After some time of silent prayer and meditation, the worshipper gazes within the waters of his bowl and may have visions. Such activities most often take place during the twilight. Families and close friends may worship together.

Enlightenment

Siemism is a matter of the heart and soul, not of doctrine. In this sense, there are no worshippers of Siem, only those who worship the beauty with which he is associated. Piety is a reverent affinity with the elements of nature more than it is an alliance with the deity.

Both the Sindarin and the Khuzdul have an enlightened affinity with their deity from birth. Their lives are spent understanding this relationship, finding their place in Kelestia. This is achieved through self-appraisal and adjustment, not intellectual manipulation. It is a state of grace available to everyone, but one that is rarely achieved by humans.

Those who attain enlightenment may take any of several courses. Some retreat to the wilderness that they may better commune with the world, and perhaps achieve even higher states. Others spend their days creating poems, songs, sculptures, or other works of art to foster enlightenment in others.

Brotherhood of the Forest

The *Uthriem Roliri* is a secretive brotherhood of human woodsmen intent on protecting the wilderness and the wildlife from those who seek to defile it. They worship Siem and consider the Sindarin to be semi-divine.

The Uthriem Roliri exists only on Hârn. They were founded in the second century TR, seemingly as a reaction to the depredations against "fair and noble life" committed by the Gargun.The brotherhood has about one hundred members, and prefers to remain a small and select group. Recruitment is generally by birth, although a few outsiders are admitted to the ranks if necessary.

The secretive nature and high wilderness skills of the Uthriem Roliri have caused them to become folk heroes. They are thought of as supernatural beings, credited with defending human villages, caring for sick animals, and saving children and "folk of good heart" lost in the wilds. One example, the tale of Lylanath, tells of a band of four who turned a Gargun swarm away from an isolated village at the cost of their own lives.

Burial Customs

The Sindarin tend to cremate their dead and scatter their ashes in the forest. In most cases funerals are informal and personal, attended by a few close friends and relatives. Since worship is a personal and solitary experience, the religious ceremony to mark the passing of the deceased tends to be rather secular. The participants generally say a prayer, or perform some other respectful act on their own, or at most in pairs or small groups.

The Khuzan practice is to bury the deceased in stone, preferably in a family vault, but if this is not practical, cremation is preferred to interment in earth.

The Holy Groves

Holy Groves are called "faerie circles" by humans, and the Taur-Im-Aina by the Sindarin. These are forest glades, scattered across the worlds. Some call them correspondence points, since from such places it is relatively easy to step between worlds. Holy Groves are used, not only as a means of travel by those who know the ways, but also as places of worship and meditation. It is no coincidence that the Holy Groves tend to be clustered in the lands now occupied by the Sindarin.

Consecrated Caverns

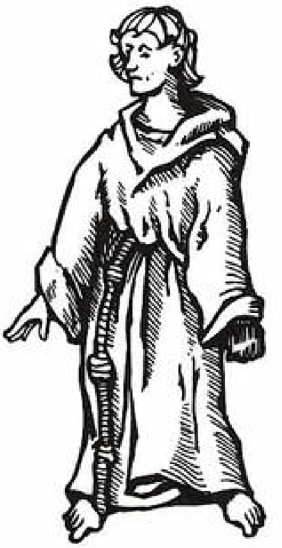
Khuzan priests have consecrated areas inside all the mountain fortresses. These caverns are considered holy places for prayer.

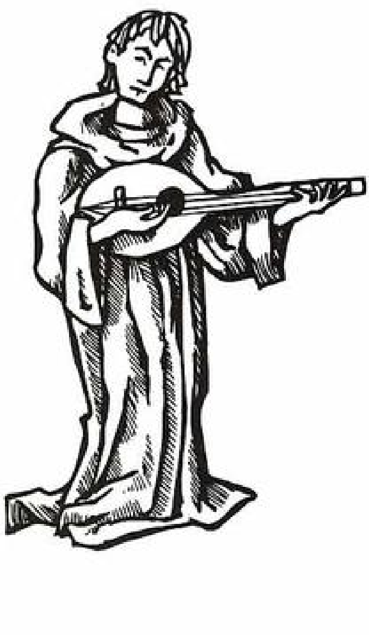
Sindarin who find grace usually depart for the Blessed Realm, which may be reached either by death, or by sailing to the "Uttermost West". There are periodic voyages from the elven kingdoms. Whether such expeditions actually reach the kingdom of Siem through his divine intervention, or whether this is a way to reach the Blessed Realm by a poetic form of suicide is irrelevant. It might be noted that enlightenment is not necessary to reach the Blessed Realm. The Sindarin also depart the mortal planes when they are weary of them, but most try to make themselves worthy before they enter.

SERENIEL (The Judge of Stones)

The "Half Lord" is the semi-autonomous demigod who intercedes on behalf of the dwarves at the court of Siem. Sereniel is most often portrayed as a heavy, bearded Khuzdul of average height. His left hand is made of fine iron, with which he judges the Khuzdul who have passed away; the spirit of the departed is crushed in his hand. If the spirit withstands, it is judged worthy of the Blessed Realm; if the spirit becomes dust, it is blown by the winds back to the mountain roots of mortal planes, from where it may be (ultimately) reborn. Sereniel is credited with gifting the Khuzdul with the arts for which they are well known, such as masonry and jewelcraft.

Sereniel's sphere is the "roots of the worlds". It is he who molds the inner tracts, twisting the rock of mountains and carving the caverns of the underworld. His refuges are beneath the world; this is where he goes to weep for the sorrow of the Khuzdul, for the evil in the world. His tears are of silver and gold. The dwarves call precious metals that they mine the "tears of Sereniel".





SWELDRE (The Prince of Stars)

Also known as "The Twilight Scribe", Sweldre intercedes with his master on behalf of the Sindarin. The demigod is credited with the creation of *Selenien*, the cursive script of he Sindarin, and with teaching them music and poetry.

The elves are careful not to abuse their special relationship with Sweldre. More often than not, he is called upon for his wise advice rather than physical intervention. Sweldre's realm is the stars and Yael, the moon. Some say that Sweldre lights the stars each night, and bears oracular dreams.

THE BLESSED REALM

The King of the Uttermost West resides in the Blessed Realm, a world of "...golden terraces, ruby moons and shrines of ivory...". This is the heaven of the Sindarin, but it is also a place that may be reached before death and returned from. Human adherents believe that this may be their own ultimate destination. Siem sits upon a throne of silver and jade at the top of Mount Sirinar, above a plateau where his court resides, and where he is attended by Sweldre, Sereniel and the lesser lords of dream.

THE ILSIRI (Angels of Dream)

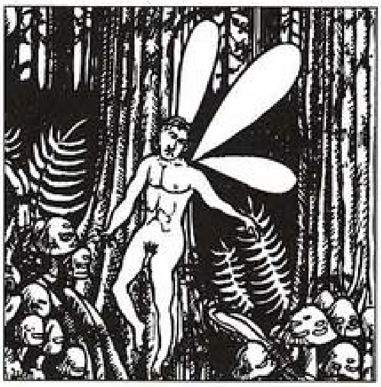
Before the other gods took note of the mortal planes, Siem would walk the world speaking in his solitude to the plants, animals, and earth. The god touched those to whom he spoke, and gave them self-awareness. Hence, a myriad of spirit-creatures became aware, called Ilsiri. The Ilsiri are ethereal beings of varying, but usually minor, power.

The Free Ilsiri

The free Ilsiri are spirits, once associated with particular objects or creatures, which have since been destroyed. Most Ilsiri perish when their host-object is no more, but some do not; these are the free Ilsiri. The Ilsiri usually possess humanoid forms about eight inches in height. They are shy, gentle, and graceful, but can be mischievous.

The Asiri

The Asiri are ethereal creatures whose elemental base is air. They have the habit of hiding within physical objects with weak or non-existent auras of their own, but they remain free spirits.



The Elmithri

The Elmithri are ethereal creatures whose elemental base is water. These are also free spirits, and may be mischievous.

The Aulamithri

The Asiri and Elmithri are free spirits who serve Siem by carrying dreams, messages and forgetfulness to the mortal races. Like other Ilsiri, they are noncorporeal, but become visible to mortal eyes under moonlight. Unlike other Ilsiri, the Aulamithri have sworn loyalty to Siem and live to serve him.

SIEM 4

COUNSEL OF SWELDRE — II

Time: 25-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self **Duration:** N/A

Gives the cleric insight into the proper course of action in a moral quandary. GM may reveal the information in any appropriate way.

THE TWILIGHT SCRIBE'S QUESTION — II

Time: 35-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch **Duration:** N/A

All plants, animals, and spirits have a unique true name and knowing it is very useful. Invoker learns the unique true name of any entity touched. Those with a WIL can initiate Mental Conflict.

CURSE OF SLOTH — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Spoken Prayer
Range: RSI Hexes **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) minutes

Anyone within *Range* has half MOV for *Duration*. Affects only humans, animals, and plants.

ILSIRI DANCE — III

Time: 25-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI miles **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) hours

Calls an Ilsiri within *Range*. The animal may resist with a WIL x3 check, unless its True Name is used in the invocation. Ilsiri are sometimes mischievious; sometimes helpful.

NATURE'S AID — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI miles **Duration:** 1 (MS); 3 (CS) hours

Calls an friendly animal within *Range*. The animal may resist with a WIL x3 check, unless its True Name is used in the invocation. The animal might not (GM Discretion) approach a cleric in a group. If not threatened, the animal will come close enough to touch.

SERENIEL'S STONE — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Touch **Duration:** N/A

Invoker learns the type of rock or mineral touched and its purity. With CS the information should be relatively precise, otherwise more general in nature.

SIEM'S BLESSING — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Gives +2 (MS) or +5 (CS) to one of STR, EYE, SML for Duration. Any dependent skills are +10 (MS) or +25 (CS) for each attribute used in a Skill Base.

WATER OF THE AZURE BOWL — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Song
Range: Touch **Duration:** Permanent

Purifies up to RSI gallons of water of anything that can cause harm. Water must be in a container.

YAEL'S CALM — III

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI Hexes **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) rounds

Ends fighting in Range. Combatants/disputants must make a roll vs WIL x3 each round to continue fighting.

TRUTHSIGHT — IV

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI Hexes **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Enables invoker to see magically hidden objects, and to perceive the AUR of a living being or ethereal within *Range*. On a CS result, invoker learns to which god the soul is committed (if any), and if there are divine or magical influences present.

WAY FROM TAUR-IM-AINA — IV

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI miles **Duration:** N/A

Invoker can physically merge his body into that of a tree or large bush (larger than invoker), and emerge from another of the same species within range. Unique True Names of both trees must be known. Invoker can enter one tree and stay there indefinitely, but is not immune to hunger.

ELMITHRI'S SHOWER — V

Time: 15-RSI minutes **Ritual:** Chant
Range: RSI square miles **Duration:** RSI Hours

Creates a gentle shower over *Range* for *Duration*. With CS, the shower can become snow, hail, or just heavy rain.

SWELDRE'S CLOAK — V

Time: 15-RSI seconds **Ritual:** Chant
Range: Self/Touch **Duration:** 10 (MS); 30 (CS) minutes

Subject's body takes on the form of an chosen (GM Discretion) animal for *Duration*. The were-creature has the physical attributes of the animal, but INT, WIL, and AUR of the subject.

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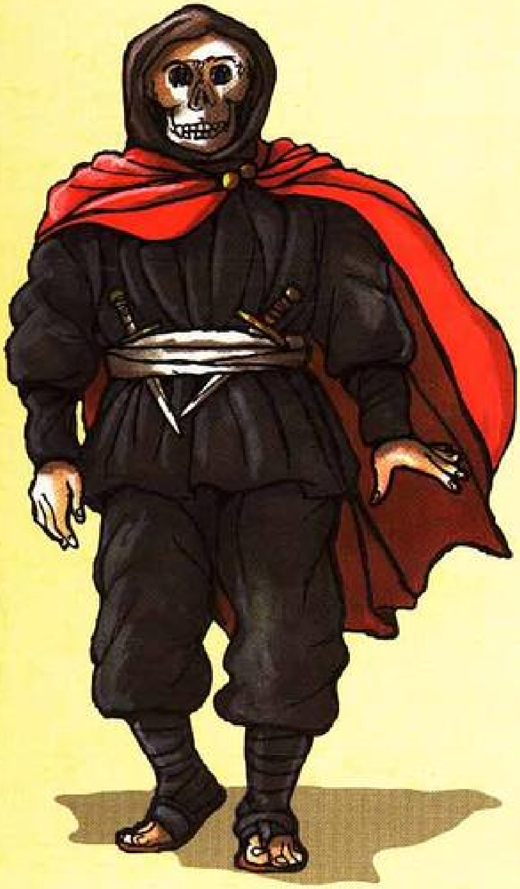
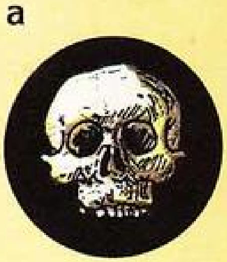


A Dezena of Naveh. He wears a scarlet mantle, symbolic of high office, and the *Ko-Shinkra*, the skull mask of imminent death. This mask is worn before a sacrifice. The priest also wears a white belt that denotes him as a temple assassin, and the two razor sharp daggers carried by all Navehan clerics...



HIGHLIGHTS

HârnMaster Religion is a second edition of *Gods of Hârn*. This edition has been completely rewritten, and includes our new and expanded Religion Rules. Together, they offer a superb background for your epic RPG campaigns.

- **Cleric Character Generation**
  Extensive rules and background for generating and running a cleric character for each of ten different religions.
- **Ritual Invocations**
  A broad selection of rituals (miracles) for each religion. There are common rituals known to all churches, and specific rituals for each
- **Libram of the Pantheon**
  Each of the ten major deities is explained, with details on their mythos, churches, temples, rituals, and much more.
- **Quality Production**
  This publication, like HârnMaster Core, is printed on cardstock with extensive use of color. The pages are loose-leaf and pre-punched for a 3–ring binder.

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